三国志 ㉓

長坂の攻防
横山光輝

希望コミックス76

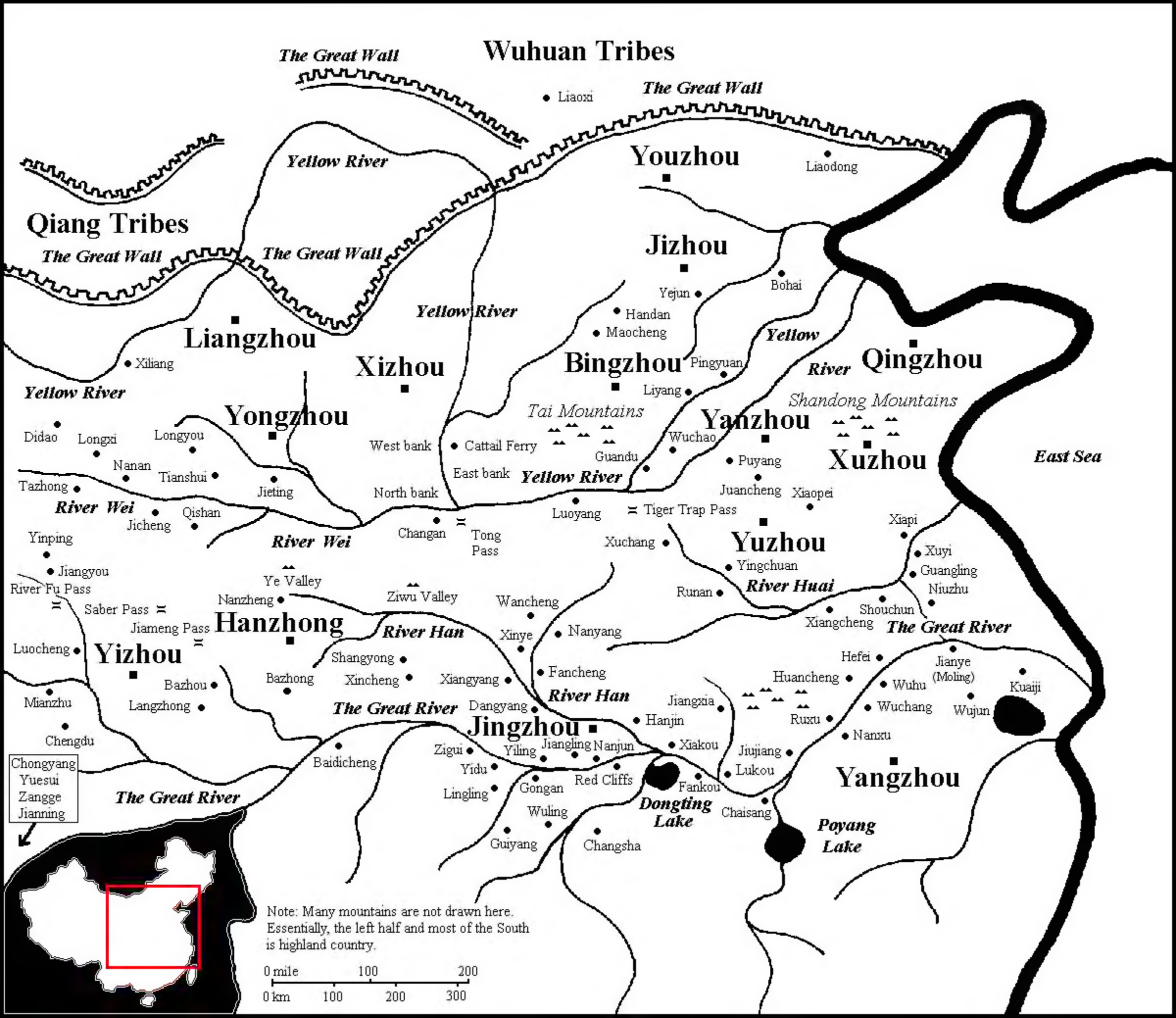
SANGOKUSHI

23

BATTLE OF CHANGBAN

ZHANG FEI YIDE

YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xiapi
Yuzhou
Yinping
River Wei
Xuchang
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Chengdu
Nanxu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Gongan
Lingling
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
The Great River
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

SANGOKUSHI'S CAST OF CHARACTERS

PART 1: CHARACTERS TO KEEP IN MIND

CAO CAO MENGDE:
THE AMBITIOUS AND MACHIAVELLIAN HERO OF SANGOKUSHI. HAVING BECOME THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, HE HAS RELEGATED EMPEROR XIAN AS A MERE PUPPET RULER. AS OF VOLUME 20, HE HAS DEFEATED YUAN SHAO, BRINGING ALL OF NORTHERN CHINA UNDER HIS CONTROL.

CHEN DENG:
THE SON OF CHEN GUI AND FORMERLY TAO QIAN OF XUZHOU'S SUBORDINATE. HE AND HIS FATHER SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL.

CHEN GUI:
FATHER OF CHEN DENG WHO SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL. DESPITE SECRETLY WORKING TOGETHER WITH LIU BEI AGAINST CAO CAO, CAO CAO SPARES HIS LIFE AND ALLOWS HIM TO CONTINUE LIVING IN XUZHOU.

CHENG GONG:
A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH HIM AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HOWEVER, HE LATER DEFECTS TO LU BU AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR. IN VOLUME 14, HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH LU BU.

EMPRESS HE:
ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HER BEAUTY WAS NOTICED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS WHO THEN PRESENTED HER TO EMPEROR LING. SHE SOON BECAME EMPEROR LING'S FAVOURITE CONSORT AND GAVE BIRTH TO PRINCE LIU BIAN. HOWEVER, SHE AND HER SON WERE REMOVED FROM POWER AND KILLED BY LI RU WHEN DONG ZHUO CAME TO POWER.

DIAN WEI:
CAO CAO'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD, RENOWNED FOR HIS STRENGTH. HE IS ALSO KNOWN BY THE NICKNAME, "E LAI," IN REFERENCE TO THE MIGHT GENERAL OF THE SAME NAME WHO SERVED UNDER KING ZHOU OF SHANG. IN VOLUME 12, HE WAS KILLED DURING ZHANG XIU'S PLOT TO KILL CAO CAO.

DIAO CHAN:
A SLAVE GIRL OF WANG YUN, WHO RAISED HER AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER. SHE AND WANG YUN PLOTTED TO DISTANCE LU BU FROM DONG ZHUO BY HAVING HER SEDUCE BOTH MEN. IN VOLUME 8, SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER GOAL.

DONG CHENG:
ELDER STATESMAN OF HAN WHO IS EMPEROR XIAN'S CONFIDANT. EMPEROR XIAN SECRETELY ASKS HIM TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO, WHO NOW RULES THE IMPERIAL COURT AS CHANCELLOR. IN VOLUME 17, HE IS EXECUTED AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT IS FOUND OUT BY CAO CAO.

DONG ZHUO:
GOVERNOR OF LIANGZHOU WHO LATER SEIZED CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND SEATED HIMSELF AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, BECOMING AN INFAMOUS TYRANT. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, LU BU.

GONGSUN ZAN:
GOVERNOR OF BEIPING AND FRIEND TO LIU BEI. HE WAGES WAR AGAINST YUAN SHAO AFTER THE LATTER TRICKS HIM AND KILLS HIS YOUNG BROTHER. IN VOLUME 15, YUAN SHAO'S ARMY CONQUERS BEIPING, CAUSING GONGSUN ZAN TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

GUAN YU YUNCHANG:
SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER TO LIU BEI AND SWORN OLDER BROTHER TO ZHANG FEI. HE IS AS FIERCE AS GUAN YU BUT IS MORE RESTRAINED AND CALM IN HIS MANNERISMS.

GUAN PING:
GUAN YU'S ADOPTED SON. ADOPTED IN VOLUME 19.

GUO JIA:
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. HE DIES FROM ILLNESS DURING CAO CAO'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE YUAN FAMILY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

JIA XU:
THE SHREWD STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO ZHANG XIU. HE AND ZHANG XIU PLOTS A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CAO CAO, BUT SUCCEEDS IN KILLING DIAN WEI. IN VOLUME 16, HE AND ZHANG XIU DEFECT TO CAO CAO'S SIDE.

LI RU:
CUNNING ADVISOR TO DONG ZHUO. WITH HIS ADVICE, DONG ZHUO FIRMLY SECURES HIS SEAT AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED ALONG WITH DONG ZHUO WHEN LU BU REBELS.

LIU BEI XUANDE:
THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. A KIND AND VIRTUOUS MAN, SAID TO BE THE DESCENDANT OF EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI. AFTER LOSING XUZHOU TO CAO CAO, HE IS CURRENTLY UNDER THE CARE OF LIU BIAO.

LIU BIAO:
THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU. HE IS CURRENTLY FACING DOMESTIC TROUBLES OVER THE PROBLEM OF WHICH SON TO MAKE HIS HEIR (LIU QI, LIU CONG).

LIU XIE (EMPEROR XIAN OF HAN):
FORMERLY KNOWN AS PRINCE OF CHENLIU, HE IS THE CURRENT EMPEROR OF HAN. HE BECAME THE EMPEROR WHEN DONG ZHUO FORCIBLY DETHRONED HIS HALF-BROTHER LIU BIAN.

LU BU:
HE IS SAID TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR IN THE LAND WHO RIDES ON THE FASTEST HORSE IN THE LAND, THE RED HARE. IN VOLUME 14, HE WAS BETRAYED BY HIS SUBORDINATES (HOU CHENG, WEI XU, SONG XIAN), WHO HANDED HIM OVER TO CAO CAO. HE BEGS CAO CAO FOR MERCY BUT IS EXECUTED DUE TO LIU BEI'S DISAGREEMENT.

MA TENG:
GOVERNOR OF XILIAN AND FATHER OF MA CHAO. UNLIKE THE ACTUAL HISTORICAL FIGURE, HE IS DEPICTED AS A HAN LOYALIST WHO SIGNS DONG CHENG'S BLOOD SEAL PLEDGE.

SHUI JING:
HIS REAL NAME IS SIMA HUI BUT HE IS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN BY HIS TAOIST NAME, SHUI JING (MEANING WATER MIRROR). HE IS THE TEACHER OF ZHUGE LIANG, PANG TONG, AND XU SHU.

SUN CE:
ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN. IN VOLUME 19, ASSASSINS MAKE A FAILED ATTEMPT AT HIS LIFE, BUT SUCCEEDS IN SEVERELY WEAKENING HIM. HIS HEALTH DECLINES FURTHER AS HE IS DRIVEN MAD BY THE SPIRIT OF YU JI, WHICH EVENTUALLY LEADS TO HIS DEATH.

SUN JIAN:
BORN IN WU COMMANDERY, HE WAS THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA. IN VOLUME 5, HE PARTICIPATES IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO. DURING THIS PERIOD, HE FINDS THE IMPERIAL SEAL, WHICH CAUSES YUAN SHAO AND LIU BIAO TO TURN ON HIM. IN VOLUME 7, HE TRIES TO EXACT HIS REVENGE ON LIU BIAO, ONLY TO BE KILLED IN BATTLED.

SUN QUAN:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE. AS OF THE END OF VOLUME 19, HE HAS SUCCEEDED HIS OLDER BROTHER SUN CE AS THE RULER OF WU STATE.

TAISHI CI:
SUN CE'S TRUSTED GENERAL WHO DEFECTED TO SERVE SUN CE AFTER BEING CAPTURED IN VOLUME 11.

TAO QIAN:
THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY INVOKES CAO CAO'S WRATH WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLS CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG.

THE TEN ATTENDANTS:
A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY SUCCEEDED IN ASSASSINATING GENERAL HE JIN BUT WERE LATER KILLED BY HE JIN'S ARMY LED BY YUAN SHAO.

WANG YUN:
AN OLD MAN WHO HOLDS THE POST OF MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN HAN IMPERIAL COURT. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL USING DIAO CHANG IN VOLUME 8. HOWEVER, HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

WEN CHOU:
HE AND YANG LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 18, HE IS AMBUSHED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY AND KILLED BY GUAN YU.

XIAHOU DUN:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. HE LOST HIS LEFT EYE DURING A BATTLE AGAINST LU BU'S ARMY IN VOLUME 13.

XU CHU:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HE WAS RECRUITED BY CAO CAO WHO WAS IMPRESSED AFTER SEEING XU CHU'S DUEL WITH DIAN WEI.

XU SHU (SHAN FU):
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING. AFTER A BRIEF STINT OF SERVING LIU BEI, HE IS TRICKED INTO COMING TO XUCHANG AND SERVING CAO CAO (VOLUME 21).

XUN YU:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S MOST TALENTED ADVISORS.

YAN LIANG:
HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 17, HE WAS KILLED BY GUAN YU WHILE FIGHTING CAO CAO'S ARMY AT BAIMA.

YI JI:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU BIAO WHO WARNS LIU BEI ABOUT CAI MAO'S PLOT TO ASSASSINATE LIU BEI IN VOLUME 20.

YUAN SHAO:
OLDER BROTHER OF YUAN SHU AND THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU. AFTER MANY YEARS OF WARRING AGAINST CAO CAO FOR CONTROL OF NORTHERN CHINA, HE AND HIS FAMILY IS DEFEATED AND KILLED.

YUAN SHU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. AFTER RECEIVING THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM SUN CE, HE DECLARES HIMSELF AS THE EMPEROR OF ZHONG DYNASTY. IN VOLUME 15, HE DIES OF THIRST AFTER BEING ON THE RUN FROM LIU BEI AND CAO CAO'S ARMIES.

ZHANG FEI YIDE:
A FIRECE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU.

ZHANG LIAO:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S TOP GENERALS. HE WAS FORMERLY LU BU'S SUBORDINATE BUT DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AFTER THE FORMER'S EXECUTION.

ZHANG XIU:
LORD OF WANCHENG WHO ATTEMPTED TO KILL CAO CAO DURING THE BATTLE OF WANCHENG IN VOLUME 12. AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT AGAINST CAO CAO, HE FINALLY DECIDES TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO IN VOLUME 16.

ZHAO YUN ZILONG:
A FORMER RETAINER TO YUAN SHAO WHO LATER DEFECTED TO SERVE GONGSUN ZAN. AFTER GONGSUN ZAN'S DEATH, HE LATER MEETS UP WITH LIU BEI AND FINALLY BECOMES HIS RETAINER.

ZHOU CANG:
FORMERLY A YELLOW TURBAN, HE MEETS GUAN YU IN VOLUME 18 AND BECOMES HIS SUBORDINATE.

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING:
MASTERFUL STRATEGIST AND FORMER STUDENT OF SHUI JING. IN VOLUME 21, HE YIELDS TO LIU BEI'S PERSISTENCE AND DECIDES TO BECOME HIS SUBJECT.

SANGOKUSHI'S CAST OF CHARACTERS
PART 2: OTHER MINOR CHARACTERS

CAI MAO:
GENERAL SERVING UNDER LIU BIAO AND UNCLE OF LIU CONG. IN VOLUME 20, BECAUSE LIU BEI ADVISES LIU BIAO TO NAME LIU QI AS THE HEIR OF JINGZHOU INSTEAD OF LIU CONG, CAI MAO ATTEMPTS TO ASSASSINATE LIU BEI.

CAO REN:
GENERAL SERVING UNDER CAO CAO.

CAO HONG:
GENERAL AND COUSIN TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 6, HE SAVES CAO CAO FROM CERTAIN DEATH.

CAO SONG:
CAO CAO'S FATHER AND A FORMER GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED BY TAO QIAN'S ESCORT AND FORMER YELLOW TURBAN, ZHANG KAI.

DING YUAN:
GOVERNOR OF BINGZHOU AND LU BU'S FOSTER-FATHER. HE OBJECTED TO DONG ZHUO'S SCHEME TO PLACE PRINCE CHENLIU AS THE EMPEROR OF HAN, EARNING DONG ZHUO'S WRATH. IN VOLUME 4, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS FOSTER-SON, LU BU, WHO THEN DEFECTS TO SERVE DONG ZHUO.

EMPRESS DOWAGER DONG:
MOTHER TO THE FORMER EMPEROR LING AND GRANDMOTHER TO EMPEROR XIAN. IN VOLUME 3, EMPRESS HE ORDERS FOR HER DEATH TO SECURE HER SON LIU BIAN'S THRONE AS THE NEXT EMPEROR OF HAN.

GAO SHUN:
ONE OF LU BU'S TRUSTED GENERALS. HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH HIS LORD IN VOLUME 14.

GUO SI:
A GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED DONG ZHUO. AFTER DONG ZHUO'S DEATH, HE AND LI JUE TOOK CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND DID AS THEY PLEASED UNTIL THE EMPEROR RUNS TO CAO CAO FOR PROTECTION.

HE JIN:
OLDER BROTHER OF EMPRESS HE. ORIGINALLY A SIMPLE BUTCHER, HE BECAME A GENERAL WHEN HIS YOUNGER SISTER BECAME EMPEROR LING'S CONSORT. IN VOLUME 3, HE ATTEMPTS TO ELIMINATE THE TEN ATTENDANTS, ONLY TO BE DISSUADED FROM DOING SO BY HIS YOUNGER SISTER. HE IS LATER KILLED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS.

HOU CHENG:
ONE OF LU BU'S GENERALS. IN VOLUME 14, HE, ALONG WITH GENERALS WEI XU AND SONG XIAN, BETRAYS LU BU AND DEFECTS TO CAO CAO'S SIDE.

HUA XIONG:
FAMED GENERAL SERVING UNDER DONG ZHUO. IN VOLUME 5, HE DEFEATS SUN JIAN'S ARMY BUT IS LATER KILLED BY GUAN YU.

JI PING:
IMPERIAL PHYSICIAN OF HAN WHO, WITH DONG CHENG, PLOTS TO POISON CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 17, CAO CAO DISCOVERS THEIR PLOT AND EXECUTES HIM.

JIANG QIN:
FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH ZHOU TAI, BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR SUN CE'S FATHER, SUN JIAN.

LADY FUYOU:
FICTIONAL CHARACTER CREATED BY MITSUTERU YOKOYAMA AND LIU BEI'S FIRST LOVE. ZHANG FEI FORMERLY SERVED HER FAMILY, WHO WERE MASSCRED BY THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELS.

LADY MI:
LIU BEI'S FIRST WIFE.

LI JUE:
A GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED DONG ZHUO. AFTER DONG ZHUO'S DEATH, HE AND GUO SI TOOK CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND DID AS THEY PLEASED UNTIL THE EMPEROR RUNS TO CAO CAO FOR PROTECTION.

LI DIAN:
SCHOLARLY GENERAL UNDER THE SERVICE OF CAO CAO.

LIU BIAN:
THE SON OF EMPRESS HE AND BRIEFLY THE EMPEROR OF HAN AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER, EMPEROR LING. IN VOLUME 4, HE WAS DEPOSED BY DONG ZHUO AND LATER KILLED ALONG WITH HIS MOTHER BY LI RU.

LIU FENG:
LIU BEI'S ADOPTED SON. ORIGINALLY THE NEPHEW OF LIU MI, HE WAS ADOPTED BY LIU BEI WHO TOOK A LIKING TO HIM IN VOLUME 21.

LIU QI:
ELDEST SON OF LIU BIAO AND THE OLDER BROTHER OF LIU CONG.

MI ZHU:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS.

SUN QIAN:
ADVISOR/EMISSARY SERVING LIU BEI. (HIS ROLE IS MUCH SMALLER IN SANGOKUSHI COMPARED TO THE ORIGINAL NOVEL.)

YU JIN:
GENERAL SERVING CAO CAO. (IN RECORDS OF THE THRE KINGDOMS, WRITTEN BY CHEN SHOU, YU JIN IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS FOR WEI.)

LU ZHI:
LIU BEI'S FORMER TEACHER AND THE PALACE COMMANDER WHO WAS PLACED IN CHARGE OF LEADING THE HAN ARMY AGAINST THE YELLOW TURBANS. HE WAS LATER DEMOTED FOR FAILING TO BRIBE ONE OF THE IMPERIAL MESSENGERS.

ZHANG BAO:
ZHANG JIAO'S YOUNGER BROTHER AND THE YELLOW TURBAN'S GENERAL OF THE LAND. HE WAS KILLED BY LIU BEI IN VOLUME 2.

ZHANG JIAO:
LEADER OF THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELLION. HE PASSED AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 3.

ZHANG ZHAO/ZHANG HONG:
THE TWO GENIUSES OF JIANGDONG, ALSO KNOWN AS THE "TWO ZHANGS." AFTER SUN CE'S ADMANT INSISTENCE, THEY DECIDE TO SERVE HIM AND HELP HIS CAMPAIGN TO CONQUER JIANGNAN AND JIANGDONG.

ZHOU TAI:
FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH JIANG QIN BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN.

SANGOKUSHI
(ROMANCE OF THE
THREE KINGDOMS)

三国志

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BATTLE OF CHANGBAN

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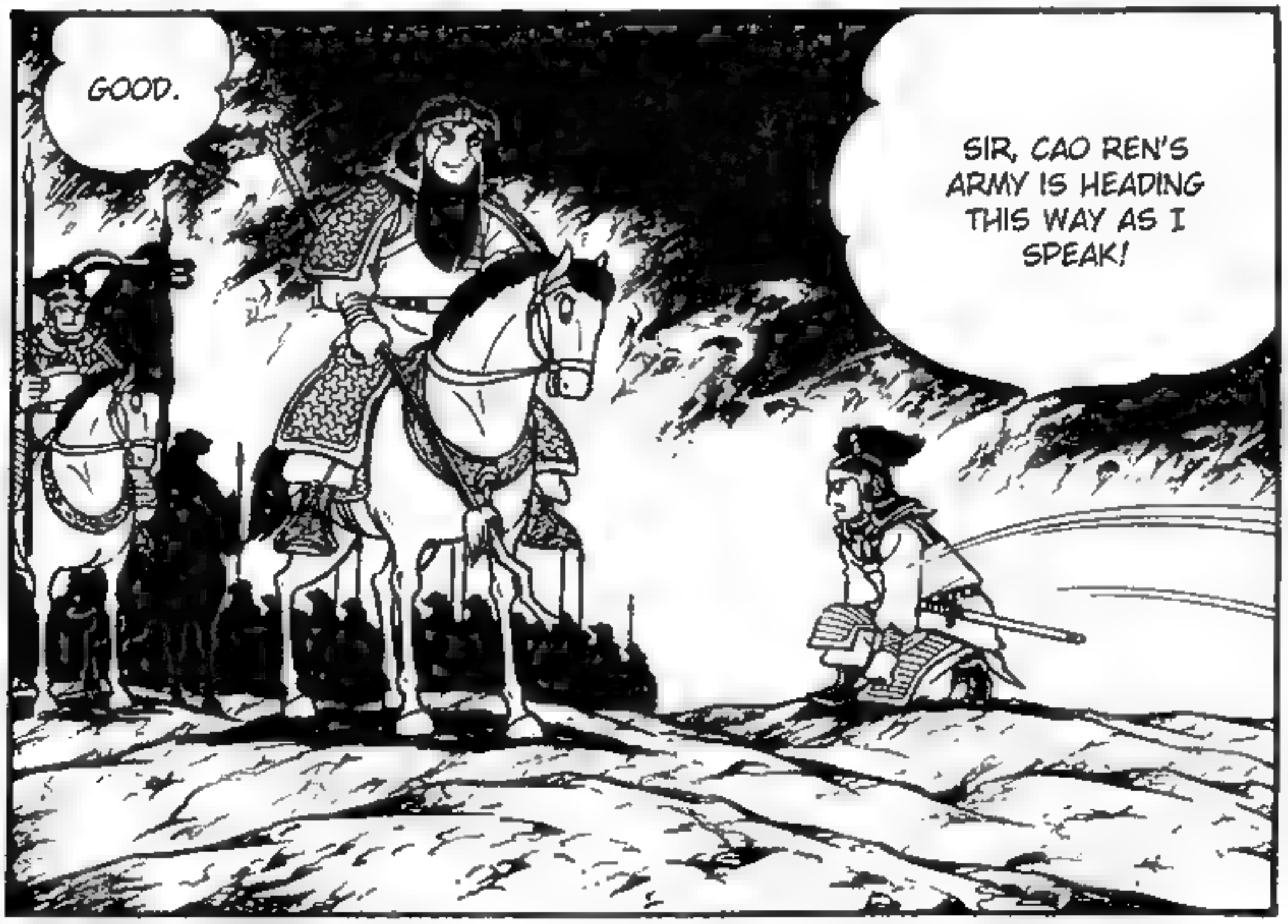
〔月刊『コミックトム』掲載〕

REFUGEES

RETREAT! LET US RETREAT FOR NOW AND REGROUP!
DAMN IT, WE'VE BEEN DONE IN BY THAT KONGMING AGAIN...


GOOD.
SIR, CAO REN'S ARMY IS HEADING THIS WAY AS I SPEAK!

THEY'VE SUSTAINED GREAT CASUALTIES AND ALMOST SEEM AS IF THEY'VE LOST THEIR VERY WILL TO FIGHT.

AND WHAT'S THEIR STATUS LIKE?

IS THAT SO? LOOKS LIKE OUR COMRADES HAVE SUCCEEDED WITH THEIR AMBUSHES THEN.

ALRIGHT, MEN! IT'S TIME FOR OUR TURN!

HM?

I SWEAR I'LL HAVE MY REVENGE, KONGMING...!

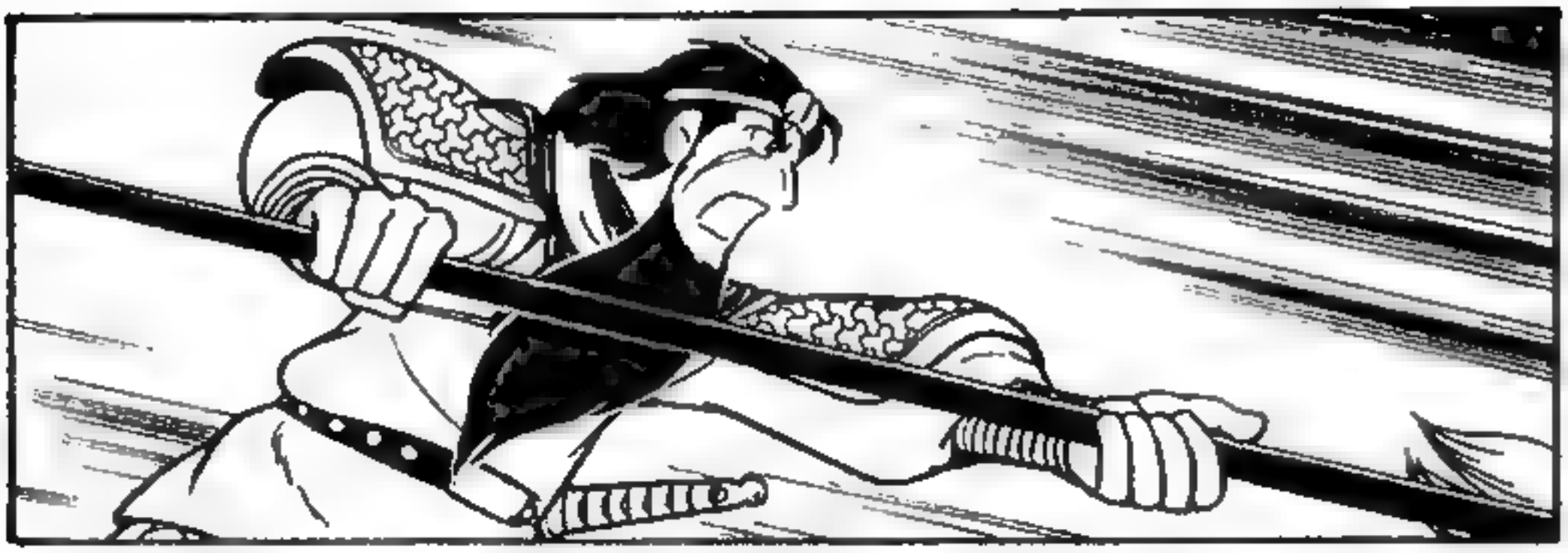
BUT YOU CANNOT ESCAPE DEATH.

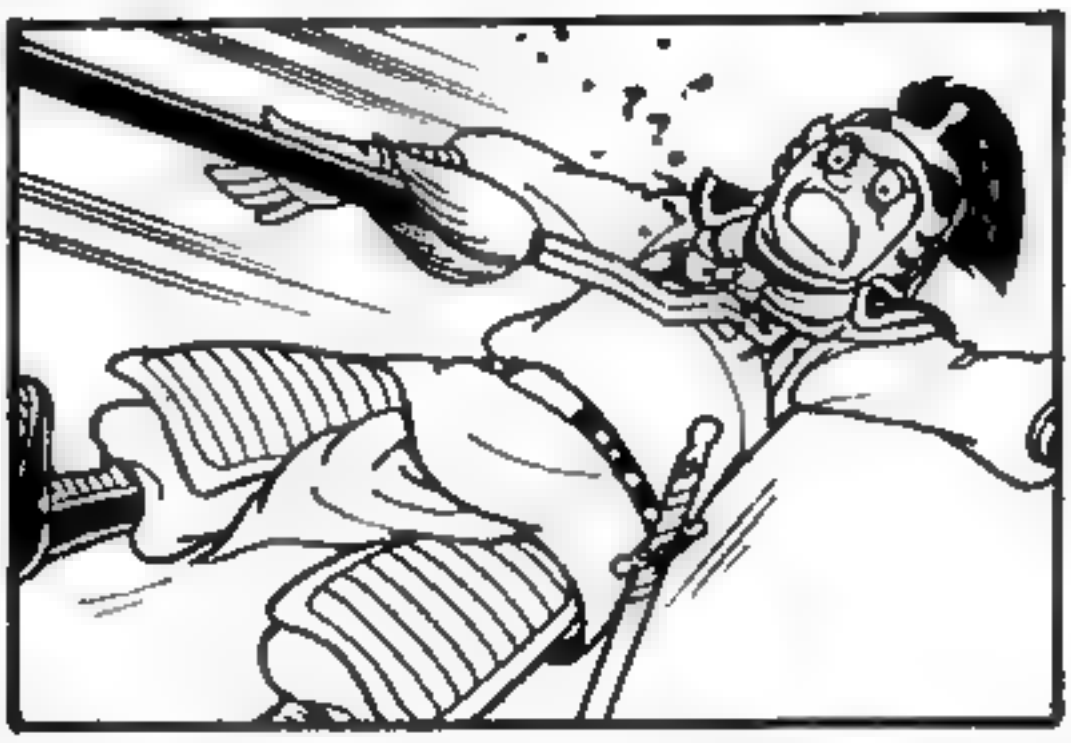
HAHAHA, FLEE IF YOU WANT.

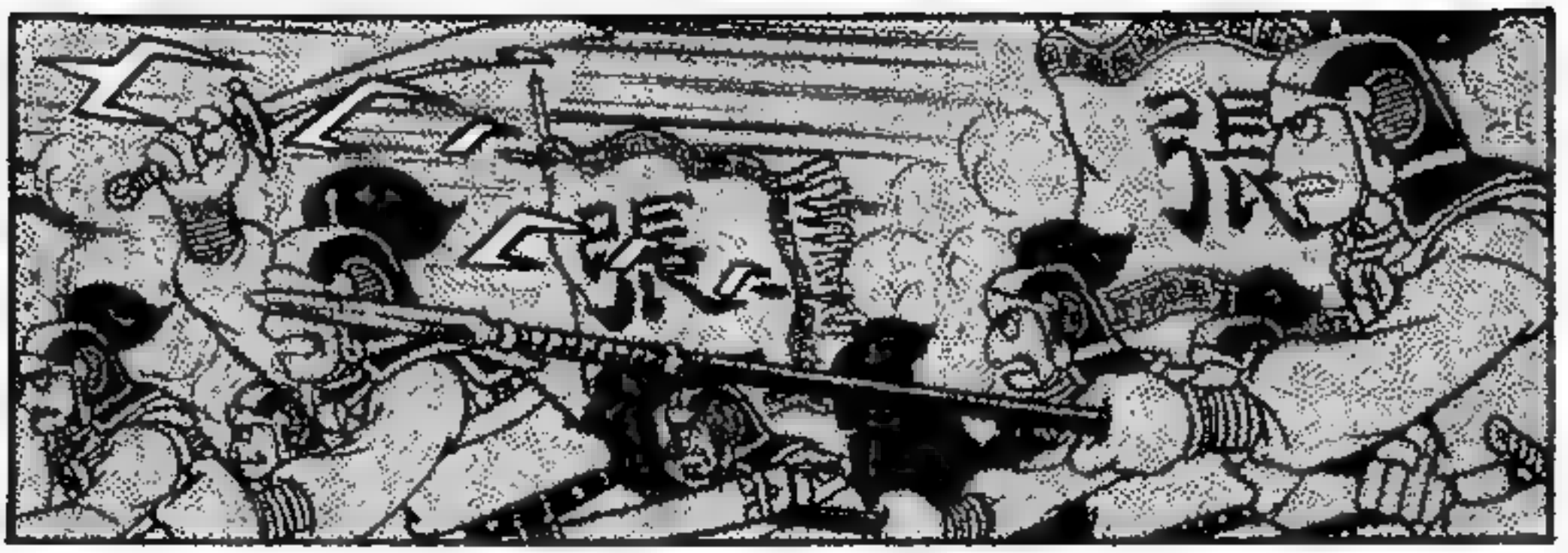
ATTACK!

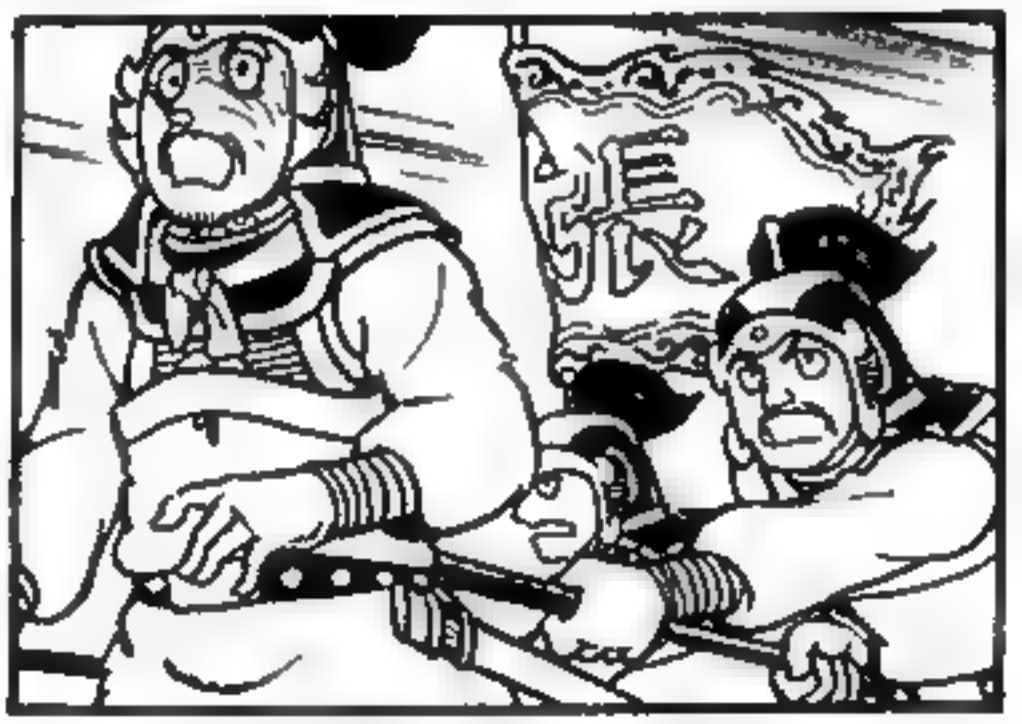
ACK!

A-A-A-AN AMBUSH!? AGAIN!?









WHY YOU...!

カッ
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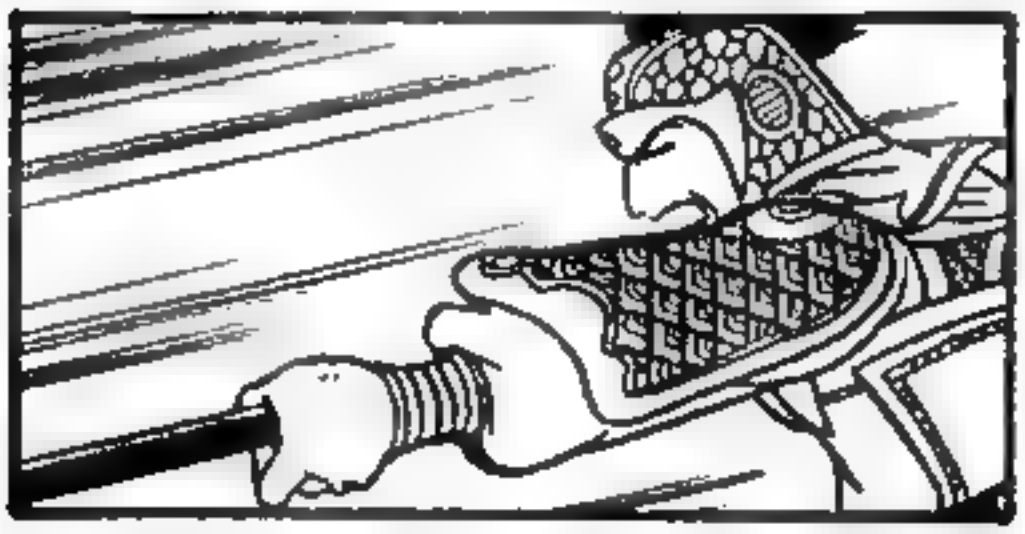
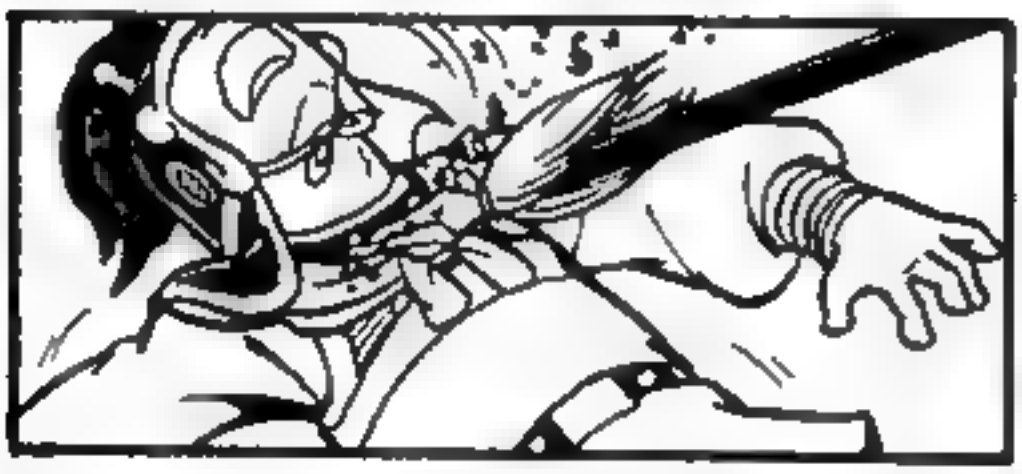
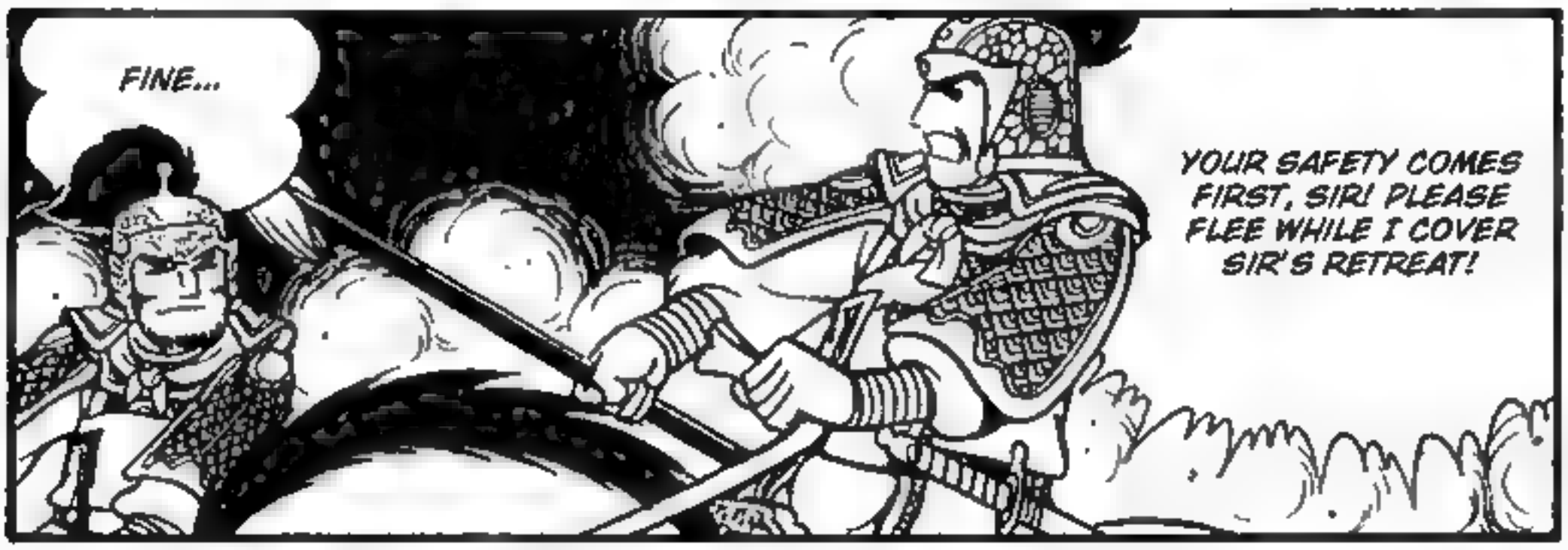
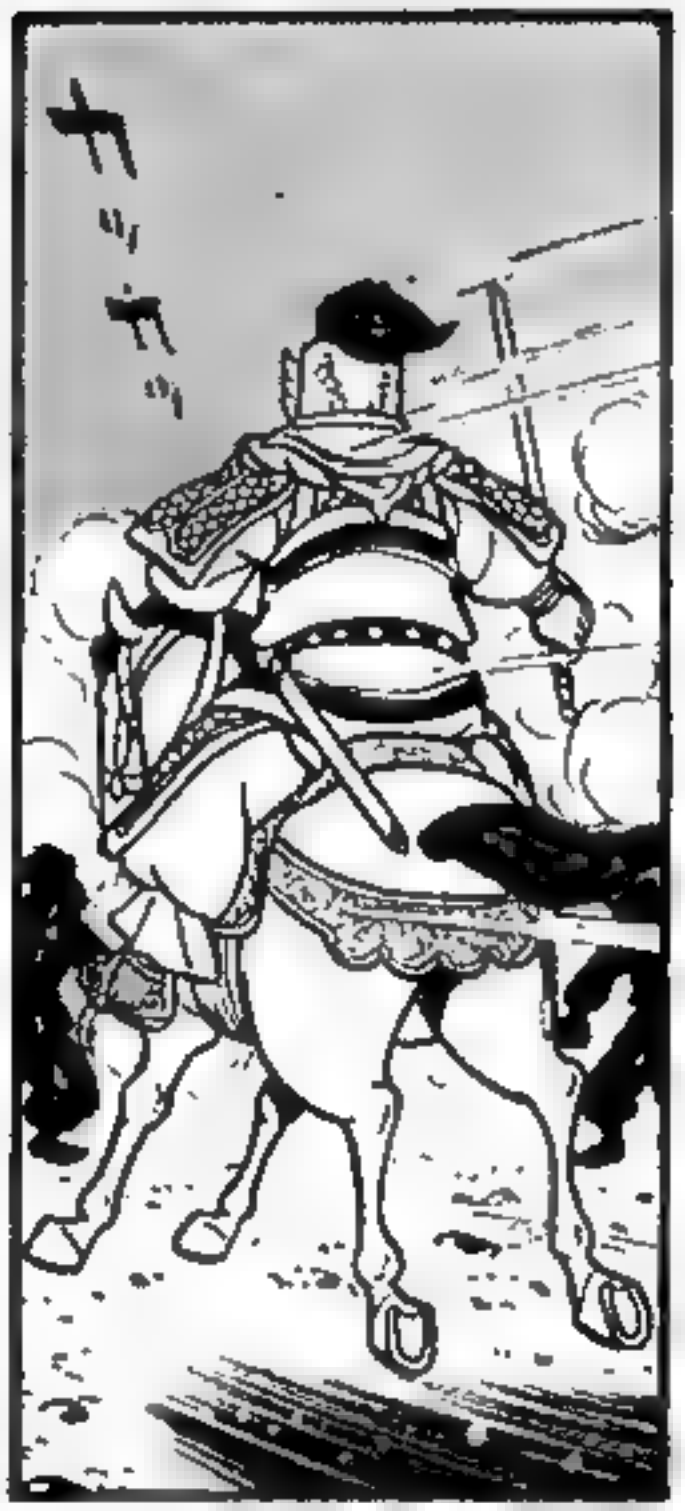


CLEAR THE WAY, SCUM!

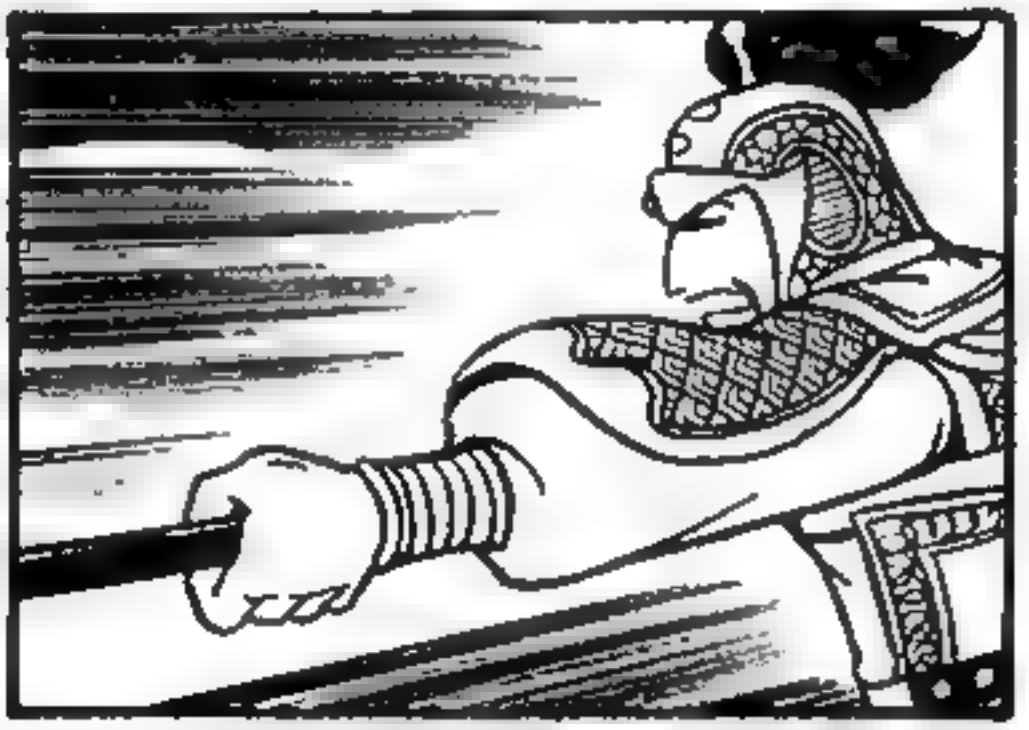


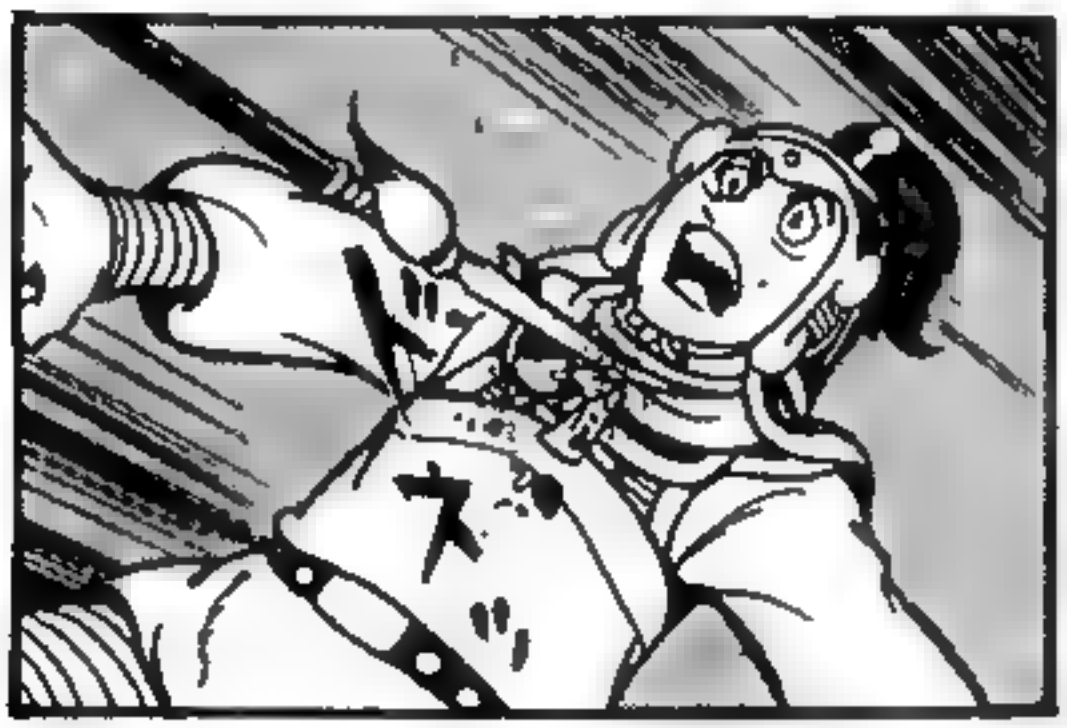

FINE...
YOUR SAFETY COMES FIRST, SIR! PLEASE FLEE WHILE I COVER SIR'S RETREAT!

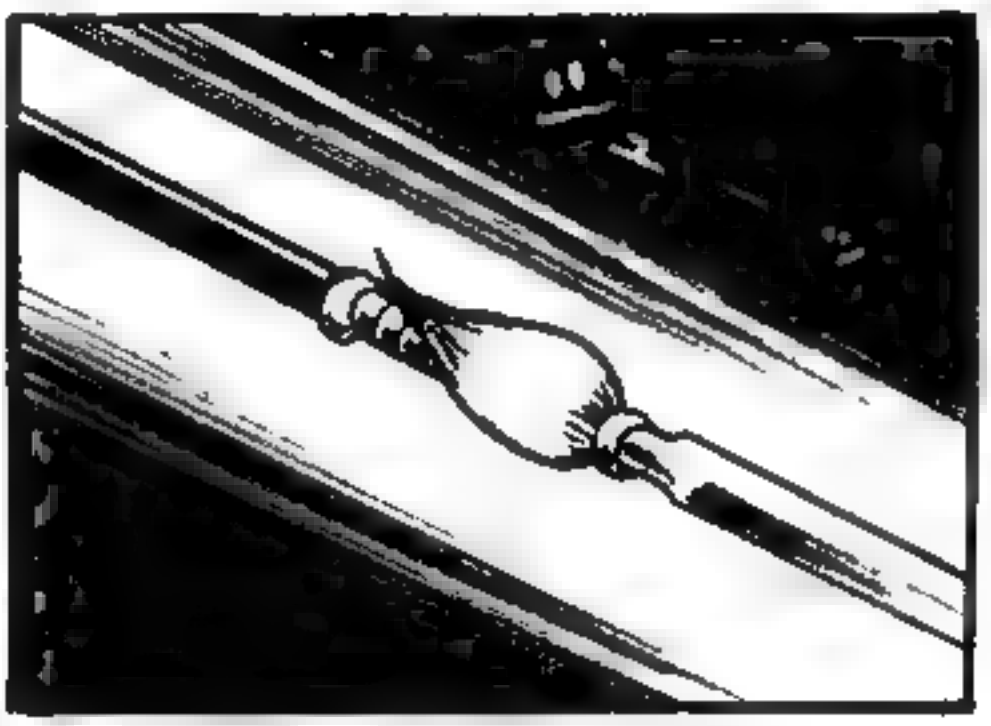
THERE GOES THE ENEMY GENERAL!



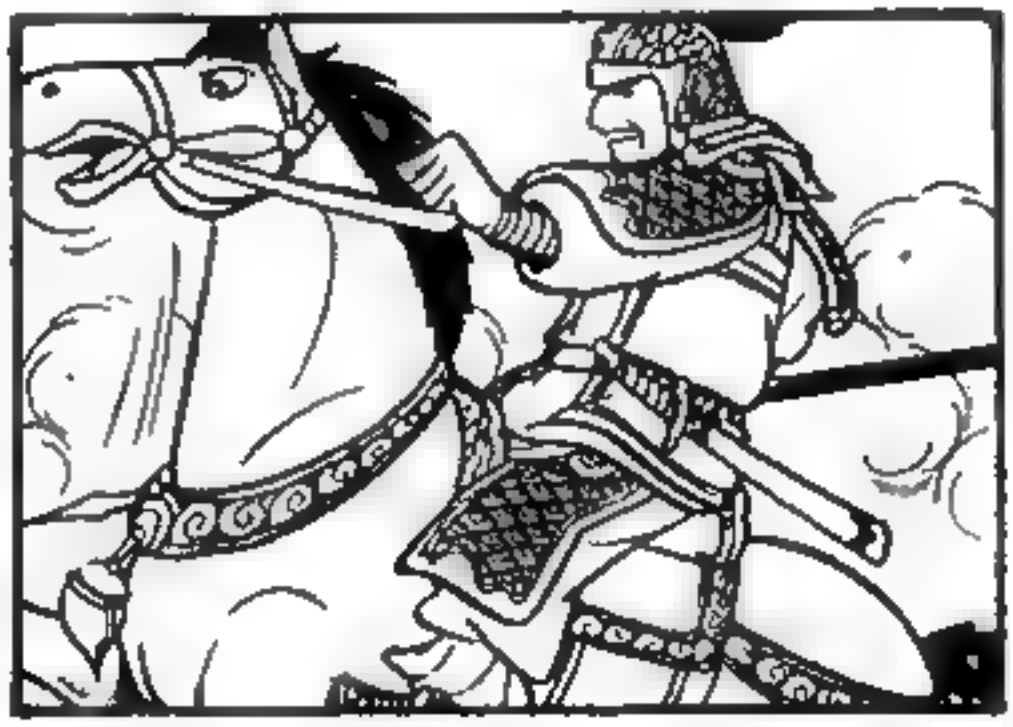
YOU'LL HAVE TO GET BY THIS XU CHU FIRST!







RETREAT, MEN!



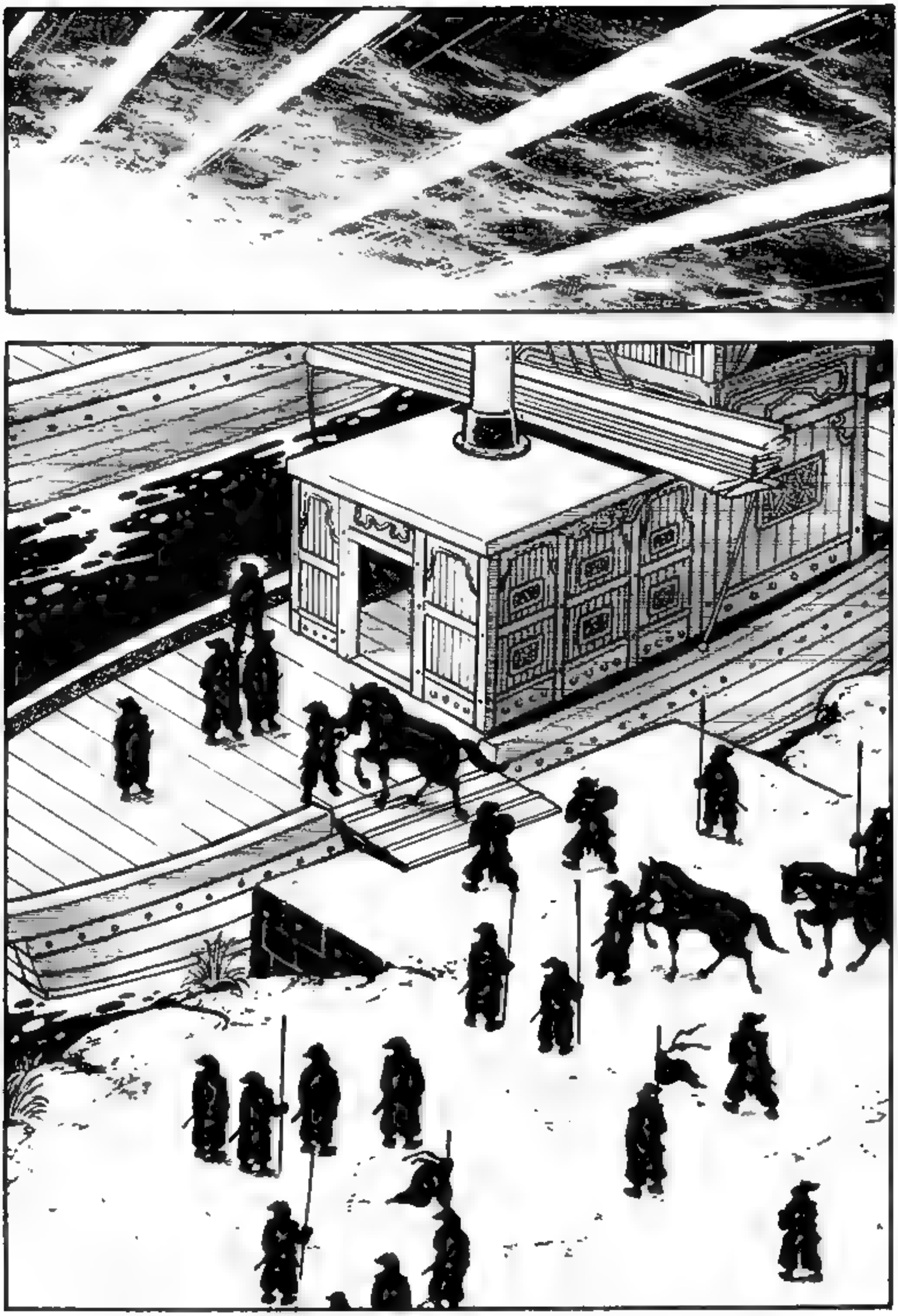
AHHH!
AHHH!

WE'VE INFLICTED ENOUGH DAMAGE.

THAT'S ENOUGH!

NOW LET US PULL BACK FOR NOW. OUR COMRADES MUST BE WAITING WITH THE BOATS.

CAO REN'S ARMY WAS ONCE AGAIN UTTERLY DEFEATED.



GREAT TIMING.

AH, IT'S GENERAL ZHANG FEI!

HM?

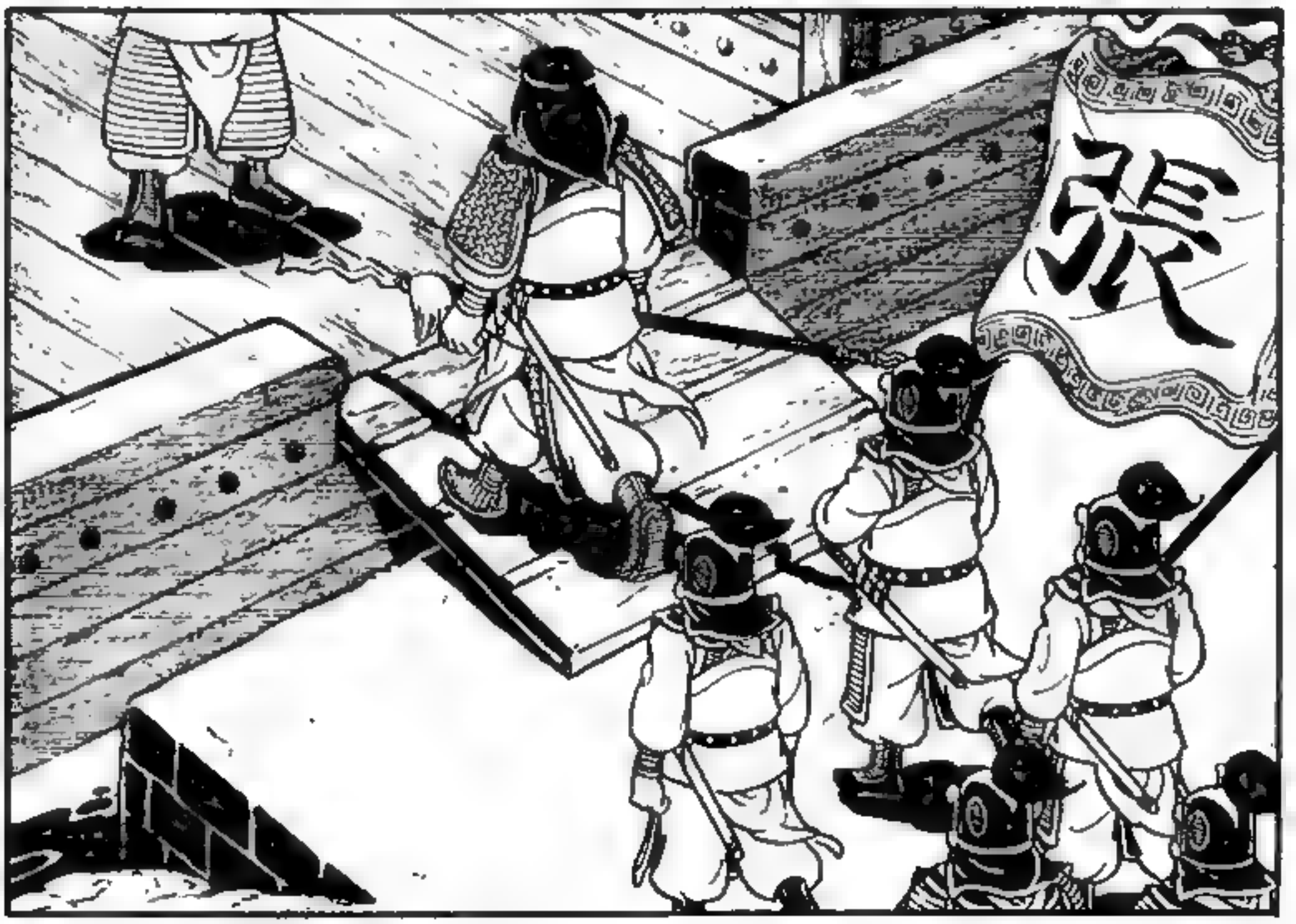
THANKS TO YOUR GREAT PLANNING, I HAD THE TIME OF MY LIFE.

HOW DID IT GO, GENERAL?

YES.

WELL DONE. NOW LET US GET GOING THEN.

GET ON THE BOAT, TROOPS!



AND SO, WITH A GREAT VICTORY IN HAND, LIU BEI HEADED TO FANCHENG WITH HIS PEOPLE.

WAN-
CHENG
WHAT!? THE FIRST DIVISION HAS BEEN DEFEATED!?

HOW DARE THAT KONGMING!

TO THINK THAT A 100,000 STRONG ARMY WOULD BE DEFEATED NOT ONCE BUT TWICE...

WE SHALL MARCH ON TO FANCHENG THIS INSTANT! IF I DON'T TAKE LIU BEI AND KONGMING'S HEADS, I SHALL BECOME THE LAUGHINGSTOCK OF THIS WORLD!

HMM?

I WOULD ADVISE AGAINST THAT, MY LORD.

HAVING BEEN DECEIVED BY LIU BEI'S LIES IN WHICH WE ARE LIKENED TO DEMONS, THE LOCAL CIVILIANS HAVE ALL FLED TO FANCHENG.

ACCORDING TO THE SIGNS POSTED AROUND XINYE FOR THE LOCAL POPULACE, IT'S SAID THAT ANY CIVILIANS LEFT BEHIND WILL BE MERCILESSLY SLAUGHTERED BY OUR ARMY.

ALTHOUGH MY LORD'S WISDOM AND FAIRNESS IS WELL KNOWN IN THE NORTH, THE SOUTHERN POPULACE IS IGNORANT TO YOUR VIRTUOUS CHARACTER. THUS, IF WE WERE TO MARCH TO FANCHENG AND RAZE IT DOWN, IT WOULD ONLY DISTANCE THE PEOPLE AWAY FROM MY LORD.

THEN WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?

AS THE SAYING GOES, "THERE IS NO KINGDOM WITHOUT ITS PEOPLE." EVEN IF SIR CONQUERS THESE SOUTHERN LANDS, IT WILL HAVE BEEN ALL FOR NAUGHT UNLESS THE PEOPLE'S HEARTS ARE CONQUERED AS WELL.

ALTHOUGH I DOUBT HE WILL SURRENDER, IT WILL BE A GOOD CHANCE TO EXPRESS SIR'S CONCERNS FOR THE PEOPLE.

FIRST, WE MUST SEND A MESSENGER TO LIU BEI, ASKING HIM TO SURRENDER.

HMM...

HOWEVER, IF LIU BEI DOES END UP SURRENDERING, THEN WE CAN REDIRECT OUR ARMY TO SUN QUAN'S WU, THE LAST OBSTACLE IN UNIFYING CHINA.

YES, YOU'RE RIGHT. THERE'S NO NEED TO POINTLESSLY LOSE MORE SOLDIERS AND THE PEOPLE'S HEARTS ALL BECAUSE OF A SINGLE MAN.

I BELIEVE XU SHU IS SUITABLE.

WHICH MAN DO YOU THINK I SHOULD SEND AS THE MESSENGER?

BUT THAT MAN WAS LIU BEI'S LOYAL SUBJECT UNTIL VERY RECENTLY. IF I SEND HIM AS MESSENGER, HE MIGHT NOT COME BACK.

XU SHU!?

I SEE.

NO, I'M QUITE CONFIDENT THAT HE'LL COME BACK. IF XU SHU WERE TO ABANDON HIS DUTY AND TURN HIS BACK ON MY LORD, WHO COURTEOUSLY TREATED HIS MOTHER, HE WOULD DISGRACE HIS FAMILY'S HONOUR AND BECOME A LAUGHINGSTOCK OF THIS WORLD.

YES, SIR.

CALL XU SHU HERE.

THE CHANCELLOR CALLS FOR YOUR PRESENCE, SIR.

YES, I HAVE A MISSION FOR YOU.

YOU CALLED, CHANCE-LLOR?

AND SO I'D LIKE TO SEND YOU TO LIU BEI AND ASK IF WE CAN SOLVE OUR DIFFER-ENCES WITHOUT VIOLENCE.

I WAS PLANNING ON RAZING DOWN FANCHENG BUT MY CONCERN FOR THE LOCAL POPULACE CAUSES ME TO HESITATE.

IF HE REFUSES, HOWEVER, I SHALL NOT THINK TWICE ABOUT ANNHILATING HIM AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

IF LIU BEI AGREES TO SURRENDER, THEN HE SHALL BE PARDONED OF HIS CRIMES AND GIVEN RANK.

YES, SIR.

IS THAT CLEAR?

呂布

FANCHENG
樊城

YES, SIR.
LET HIM THROUGH IMMEDIATELY.

WHAT? XU SHU IS HERE?

THIS WAY.

IT'S WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU AGAIN, XU SHU.
THE SAME TO YOU, SIR.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE REASON I'VE COME HERE TODAY IS FOR BUSINESS.

YES, SIR.
HAVE YOU BEEN IN GOOD HEALTH?

CAO CAO HAS SENT ME AS HIS MESSENGER TO CALL FOR A PEACEFUL WAY TO SETTLE THE CONFLICT BETWEEN YOU AND HIM SO THAT THE PEOPLE NEEDN'T BE HURT.

YES, THAT IS CERTAINLY TO BE EXPECTED FROM THE INFAMOUS CAO CAO.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, THIS IS MERELY A PLOY TO WIN THE HEARTS OF THE SOUTHERN PEOPLE. HIS DAMMING UP THE WHITE RIVER CLEARLY REVEALS HIS INTENTION TO ATTACK.

I'M AFRAID I CAN'T.

XU SHU, WHAT SAY YOU AND I WORK TOGETHER ONCE AGAIN?

TO TURN MY BACK ON HIM NOW WOULD DISGRACE THE HONOUR OF MY FAMILY AND MYSELF.

CAO CAO HAS COURTEOUSLY RESPECTED MY MOTHER'S PASSING AWAY WITH A LAVISH FUNERAL. OF COURSE, IT WAS ALL IN ORDER TO WIN ME OVER, BUT THE FACT THAT I AM IN HIS DEBT REMAINS UNCHANGED.

I UNDERSTAND.

SIR WILL UNDOUBTEDLY FACE MANY HARDSHIPS IN THE NEAR FUTURE BUT WITH KONGMING AT YOUR SIDE, I AM SURE YOU CAN STOP CAO CAO'S IMMORAL WAYS.

'TIS A SHAME THAT I CANNOT HELP OUT A FRIEND WHO'S TRAPPED BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE.

NO, I'M AFRAID NOT.

NOW THEN, WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE AS OUR NEXT COURSE OF ACTION? DO YOU THINK WE CAN HOLD OUT AGAINST CAO CAO'S FORCES FROM HERE IN FANCHENG?

I SEE.

BUT I BELIEVE WE STAND A GOOD CHANCE AT XIANGYANG CASTLE.

ALRIGHT THEN, LET US NOT DELAY IN OUR ACTIONS.

WHETHER THEY WISH TO CONTINUE FOLLOWING SIR OR NOT IS THEIR OWN FREE CHOICE.

AND WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST WE DO WITH THE CIVILIANS WE BROUGHT FROM XINYE? AS MY LOYAL SUPPORTERS, I CANNOT ABANDON THEM.

YES.
GUAN YU, LET THE PEOPLE KNOW THAT THEY CAN CHOOSE TO FOLLOW US OR NOT.

LISTEN WELL!

UNFORTUNATELY, THIS CASTLE ALONE CANNOT FEND OFF CAO CAO'S GREAT ARMY AND SO LORD LIU BEI HAS DECIDED TO EVACUATE TO XIANGYANG.

CAO CAO'S ARMY SHALL ATTACK FANCHENG VERY SOON FROM NOW.

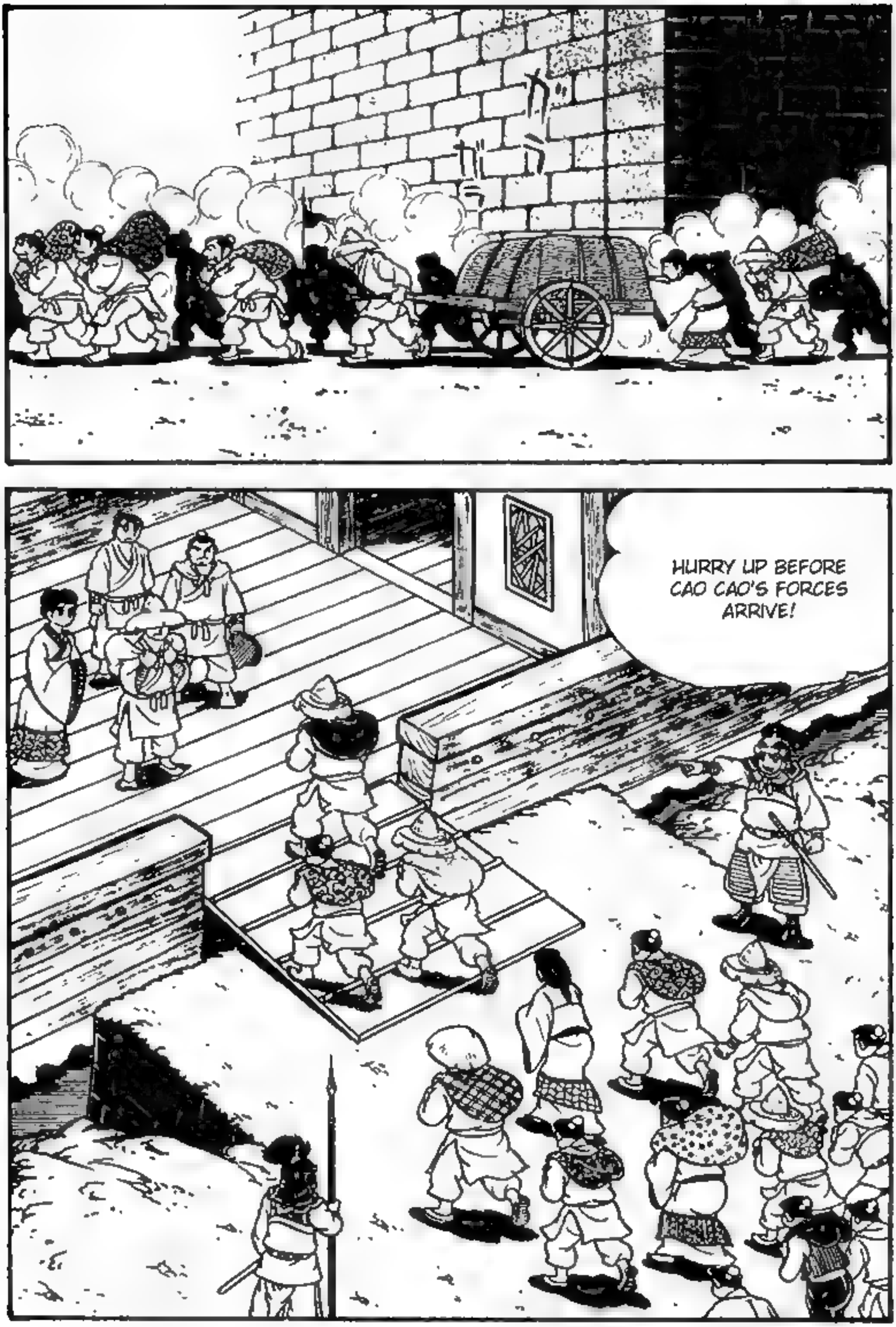
I'VE ONLY COME THIS FAR BECAUSE I TRUST LORD LIU. PLEASE ALLOW ME TO CONTINUE FOLLOWING HIM.

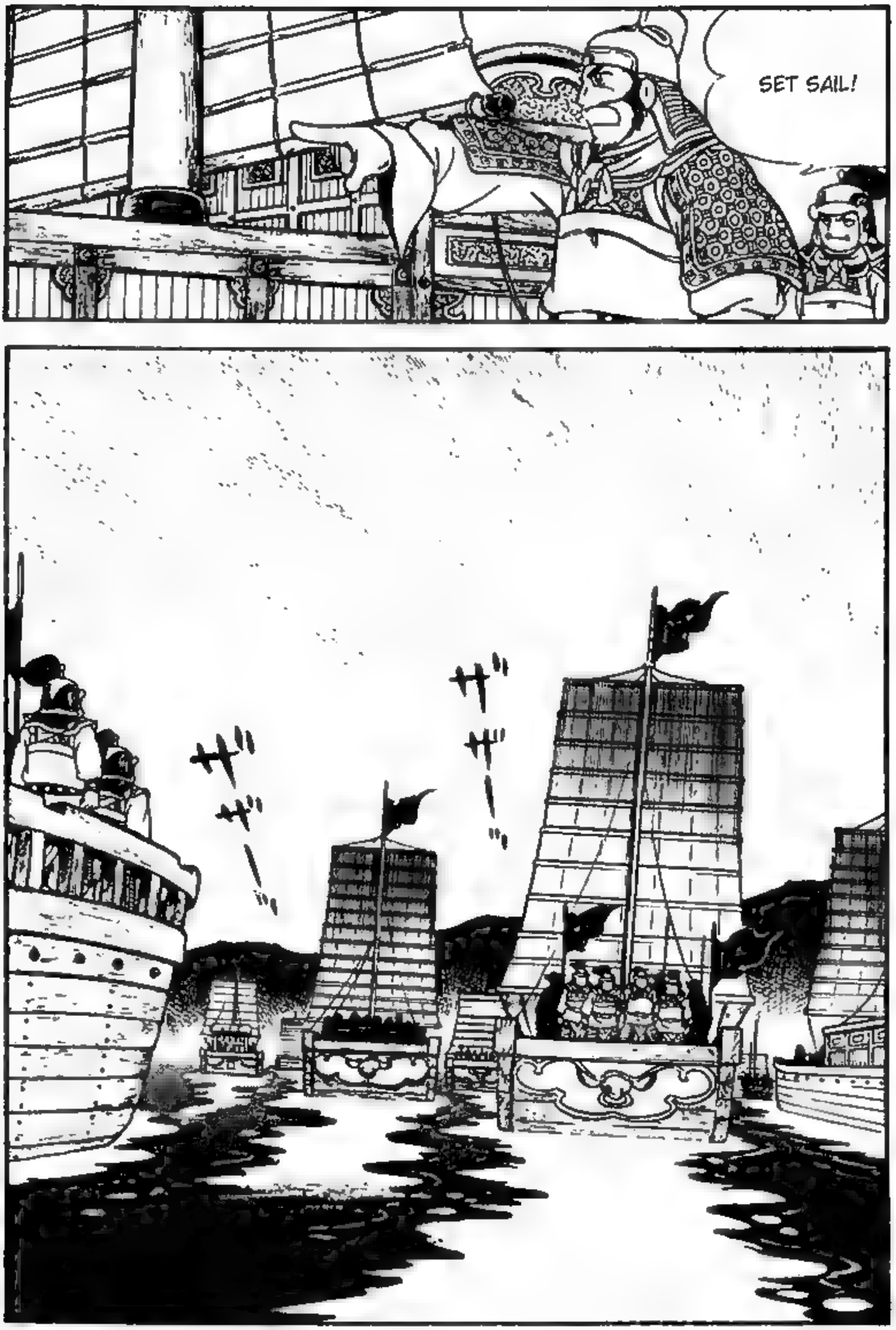
I LEAVE THE DECISION TO FOLLOW LORD LIU TO XIANGYANG IN EACH OF YOUR HANDS.

THEN GET ON THE BOATS RIGHT AWAY!

SAME FOR ME!

ME TOO!


HURRY UP BEFORE CAO CAO'S FORCES ARRIVE!


SET SAIL!

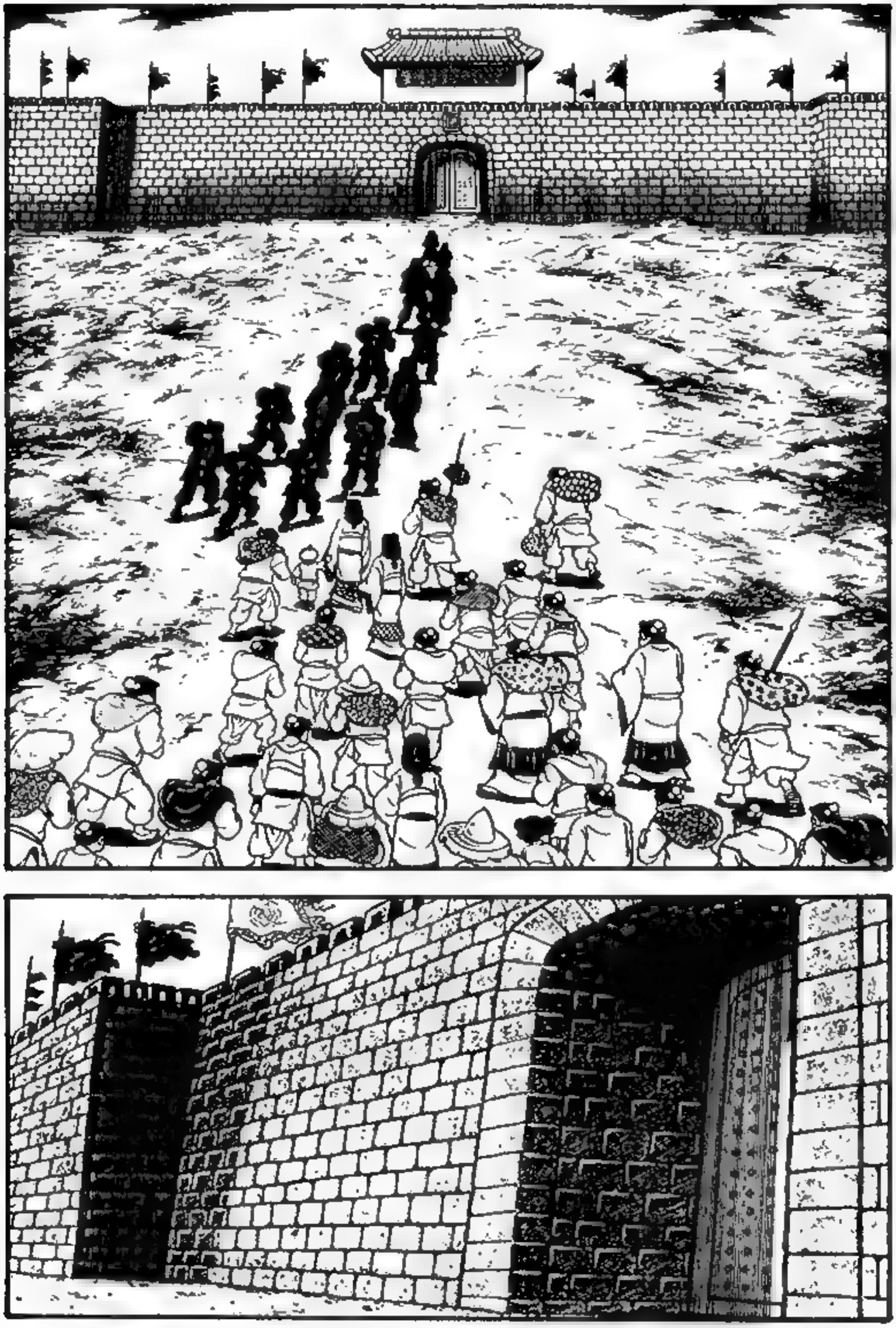
OVER THERE!

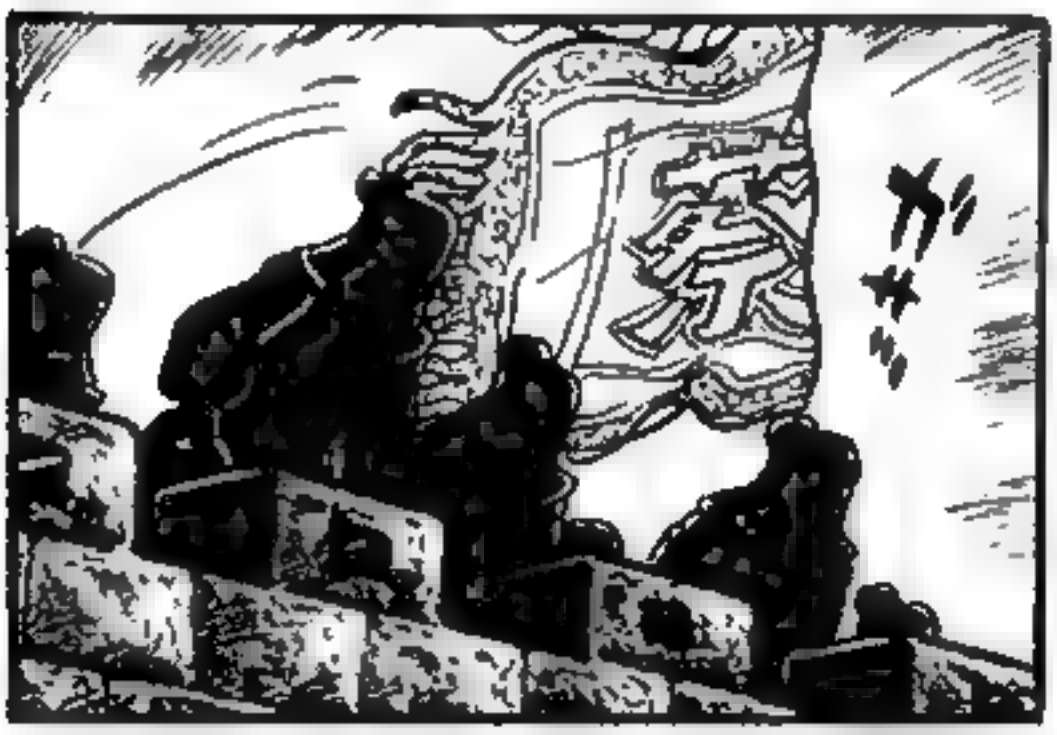
SO THEY'VE ALL DECIDED TO CONTINUE FOLLOWING ME...

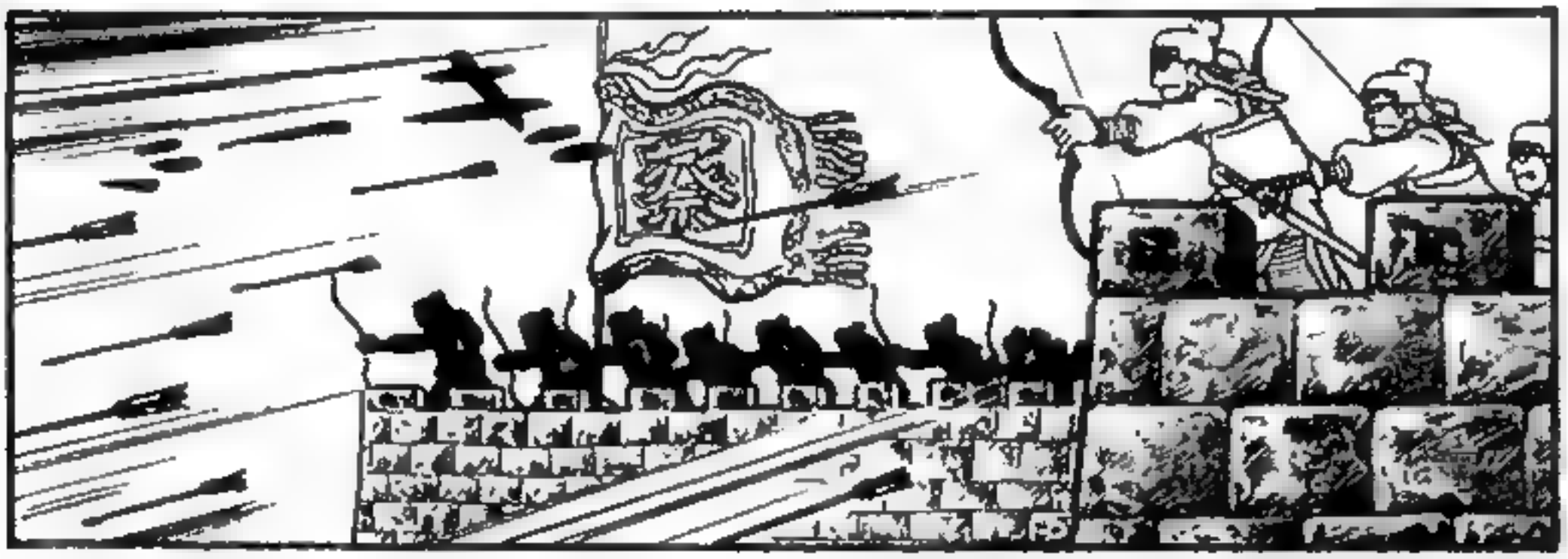
WE'VE MANAGED TO AVOID THEM JUST BY A HAIR'S BREADTH.

IT'S CAO CAO'S FORCES.

HURRY UP! XIANGYANG CASTLE IS RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYES!







*FLAGS (蔡) READ CAI

AHH!

AGHH!

HAVE YOU GONE MAD!?

W-WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS!?

CAI MAO!

SILENCE! ANY WHO GOES AGAINST CHANCELLOR CAO CAO IS NOTHING BUT A TREACHEROUS REBEL!

DON'T HESITATE AND SHOOT EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM!

WHAT?

CEASE THIS AT ONCE, CAI MAO!

SILENCE! HARBOURING LIU BEI WILL ONLY BRAND US AS REBELS OF HAN! DO YOU WISH TO BE DESTROYED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY!?

LIU BEI IS A MAN DEEPLY TRUSTED BY OUR FORMER LORD, LIU BIAO! AND YET YOU DARE SHOOT YOUR ARROWS AT HIM!?

THE ONLY REBEL I SEE HERE IS YOU, WHO SOLD OUT JINGZHOU JUST TO GARNER CAO CAO'S FAVOUR!

TROOPS! I ORDER YOU TO OPEN THE CASTLE GATES AND WELCOME LIU BEI!

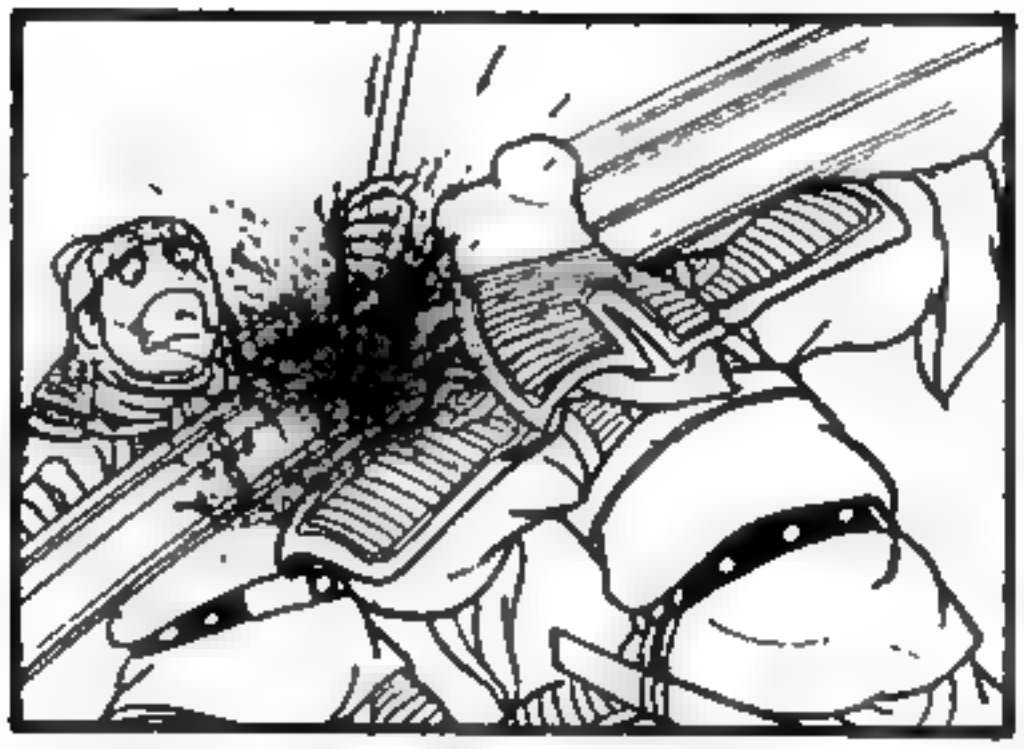
KILL THESE REBELS!

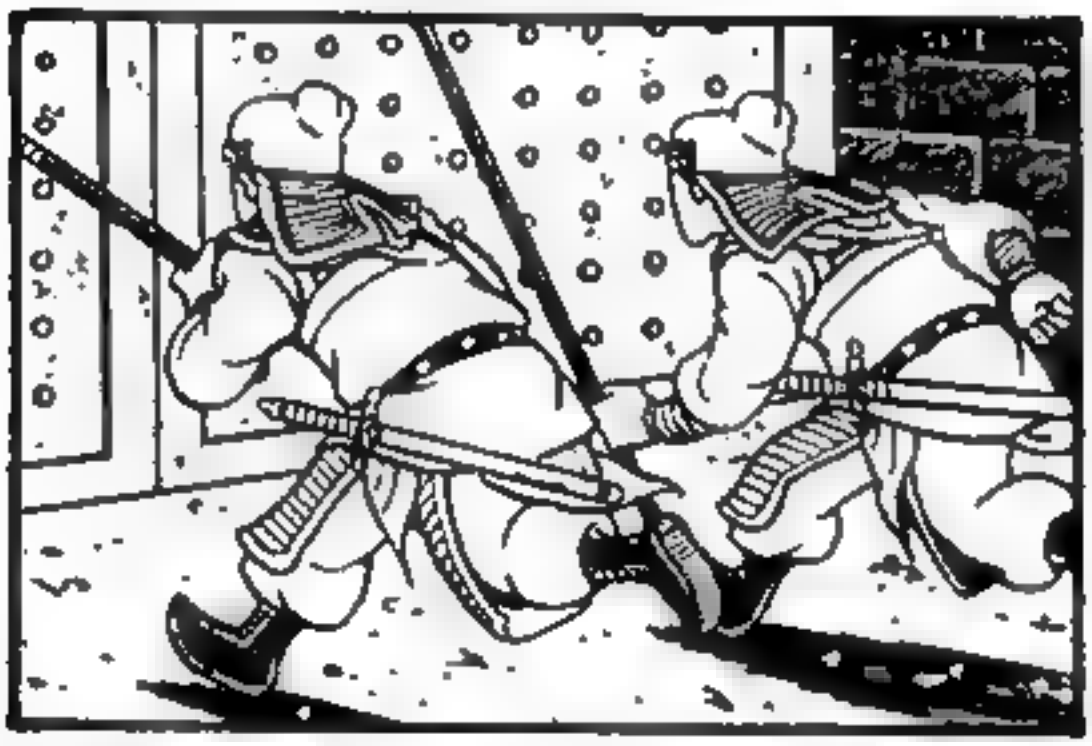
YOU DARE DEFY MY ORDERS!?

WHA!

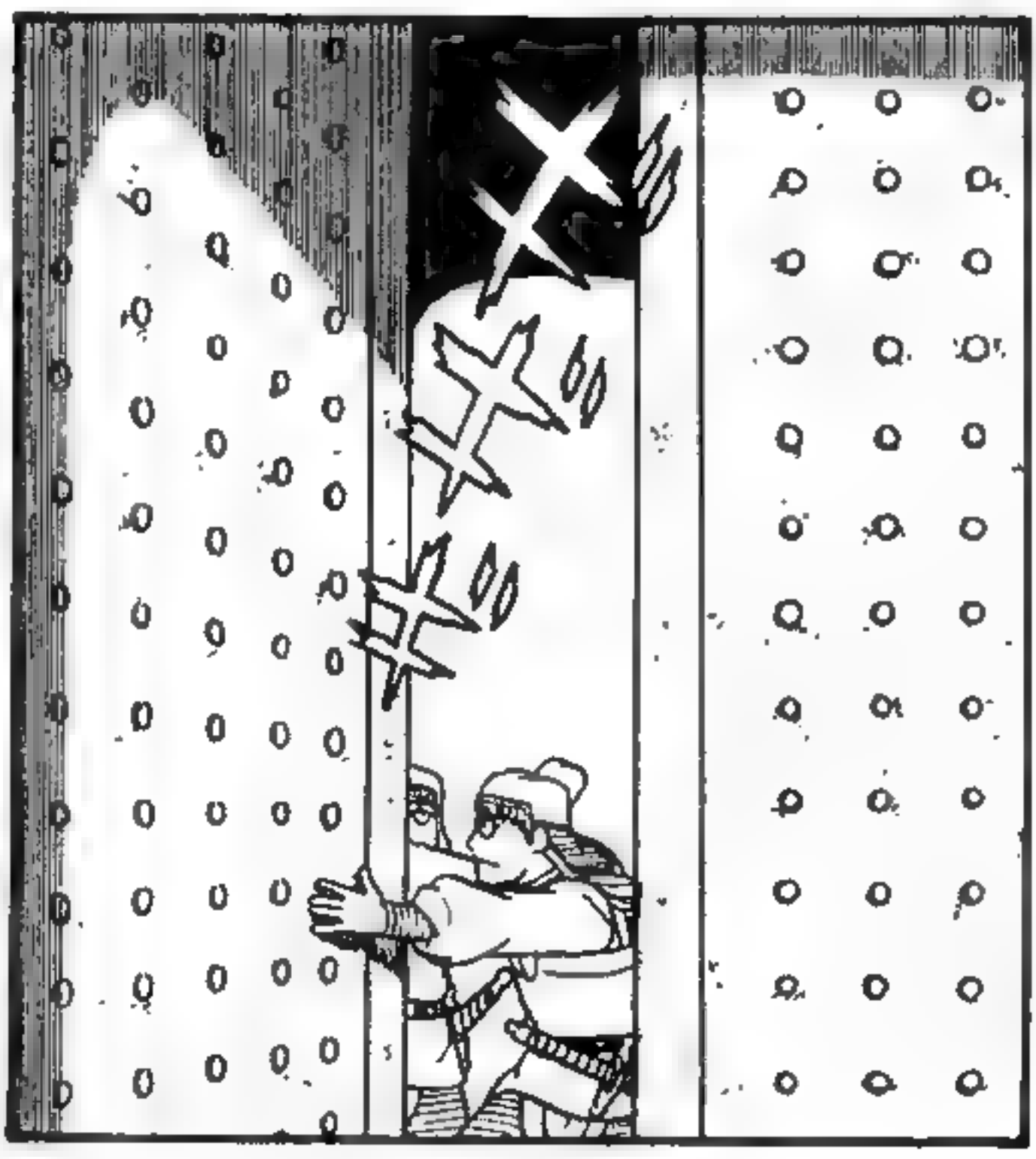
IF YOU STILL WISH TO INTERFERE, I SHALL RESORT TO VIOLENCE.

YOU FOOLS! OPEN YOUR EYES AND REALIZE WHO THE REAL REBEL IS!





LORD LIU BEI! PLEASE HURRY INSIDE!



KILL THESE REBELS AND CLOSE THE GATES!

THE SOLDIERS MUST BE FIGHTING AMONGST THEMSELVES.

THERE APPEARS TO BE TROUBLE WITHIN THE CASTLE.

WE CANNOT INVOLVE OURSELVES IN THIS MESS RIGHT NOW AS CAO CAO'S ARMY IS CLOSE BEHIND OUR HEELS.

SHOULD WE GO IN OR NOT?

AS ONE OF JINGZHOU'S BEST FORTRESSES, IT IS WELL STOCKED WITH FOOD AND OTHER SUPPLIES.

JIANGLING?

ALTHOUGH IT'S A BIT FAR FROM HERE, I SUGGEST WE MOVE TO JIANGLING CASTLE.

ALRIGHT.

TO JIANGLING, PEOPLE!

TO JIANG-LING!

TO JIANG-LING!

I'D RATHER FOLLOW LIU BEI THAN CAI MAO IF YOU ASK ME.

AH, LORD LIU BEI IS LEAVING!

ME TOO!

W-WAIT FOR ME, LORD LIU!

PLEASE TAKE US WITH YOU!

WAIT FOR US!

SHOOT THOSE TRAITORS!

ガッゴガ

WE'LL BE CAUGHT BY CAO CAO'S ARMY IN NO TIME IF WE CONTINUE MARCHING AT THIS SLOW PACE.

MY LORD!

BUT IF CAO CAO'S ARMY CATCHES US OUT IN THE OPEN LIKE THIS, WE RISK ANNHILATION.

I'M AFRAID MOVING ANY FASTER THAN THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH ALL THESE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

NO.

HOW ABOUT WE LEAVE THESE PEOPLE TO THEIR FATE WHILE WE HEAD ON OVER TO JIANGLING FIRST?

BUT BOTH FATHER AND SON SHALL BE KILLED ONCE THE ENEMY CATCHES UP.

THESE PEOPLE FOLLOW ME AS A SON FOLLOWS HIS FATHER. THEY CONTINUE THIS GRUELLING MARCH FRAUGHT WITH DANGERS BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE IN ME. SO HOW CAN YOU EXPECT ME TO JUST ABANDON THEM?

A KINGDOM IS NOTHING WITHOUT ITS PEOPLE. I MAY HAVE LOST MY LANDS BUT I HAVE NOT LOST MY PEOPLE. IF THE HEAVENS TRULY WISH FOR MY DEATH, THEN I WOULD RATHER DIE WITH MY PEOPLE THAN DIE ALONE.

YES?

GUAN YU.

IF MY LORD'S CONVICTION IS UNWAVERING, I SHAN'T OBJECT.

AH, EXCELLENT IDEA.

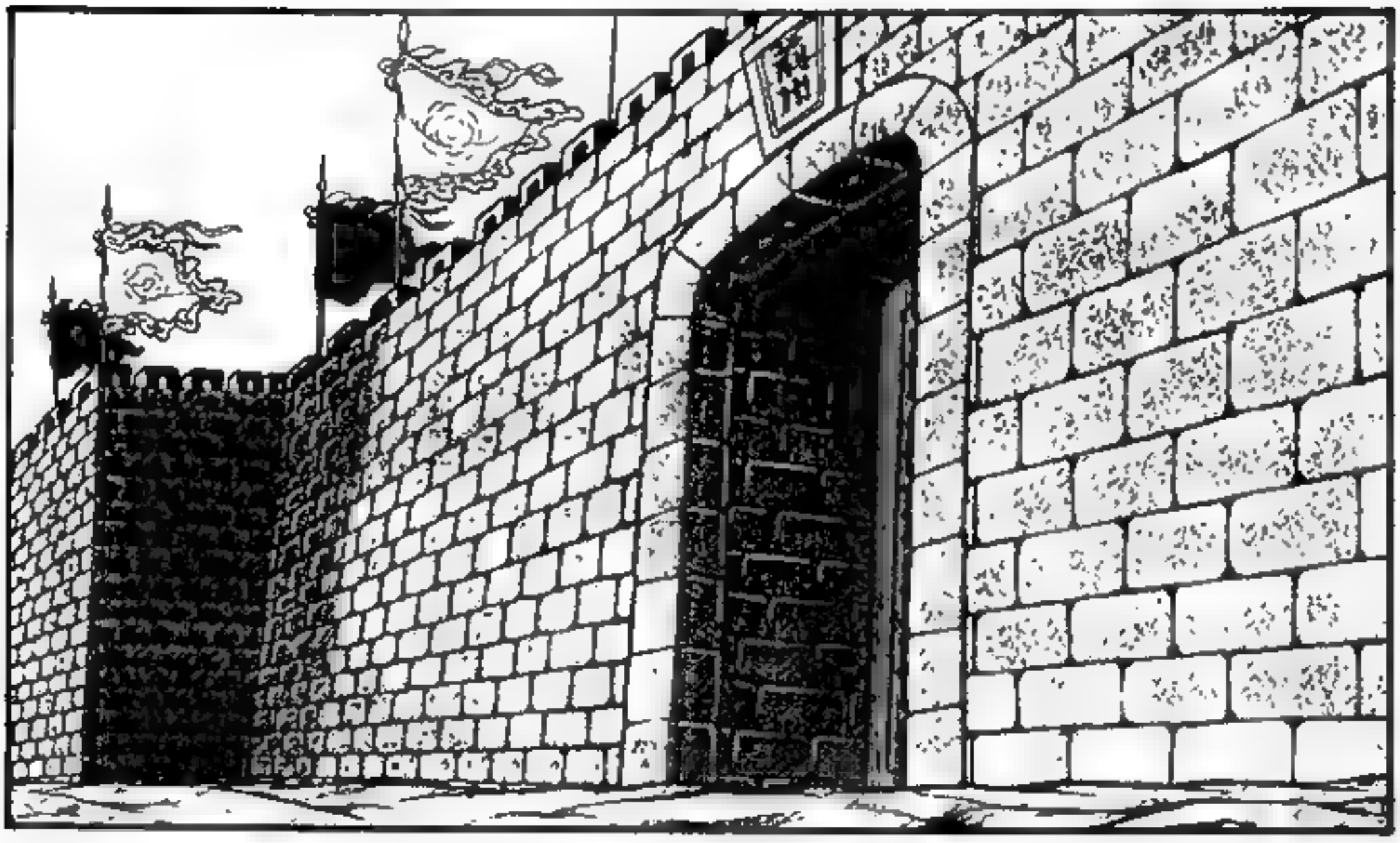
TAKE 500 MEN AND GO TO JIANGXIA, WHERE YOU WILL FIND LIU QI. EXPLAIN TO HIM OUR URGENT SITUATION AND REQUEST REINFORCEMENTS.

TROOPS! WE SHALL HEAD TO JIANGXIA AT THE GREATEST SPEED!

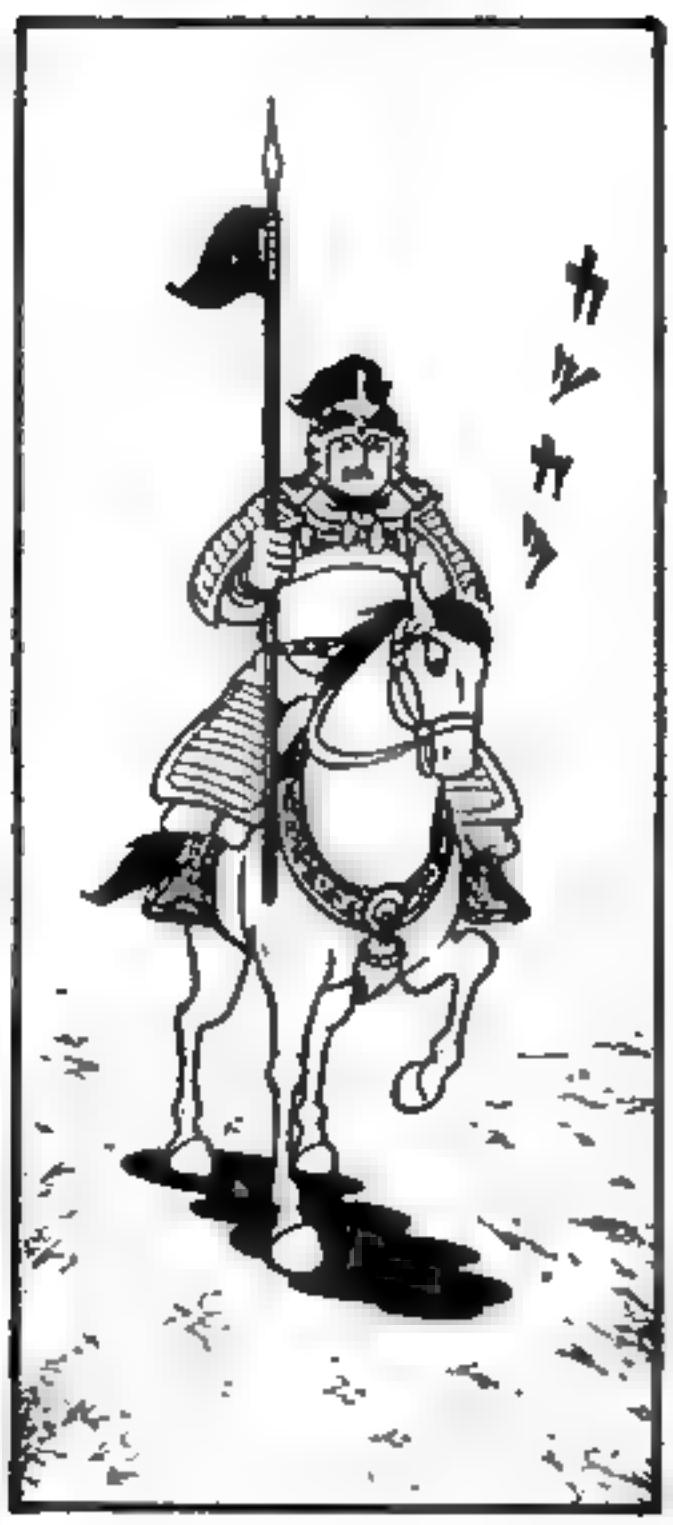
YAHH!

THOUGH I RESPECT MY LORD'S DECISION, OUR FUTURE LOOKS MORE AND MORE UNCERTAIN...

ASSASSINATION



A MESSAGE FOR JINGZHOU'S LORD, LIU CONG!
CHANCELLOR CAO CAO IS SET TO ARRIVE HERE SHORTLY SO OPEN THE CASTLE GATES AND PREPARE TO RECEIVE HIM!



U-UNDER-
STOOD!

OPEN THE GATES AND TIDY UP THE ENTRANCE AREA. WE MUST RECEIVE THE CHANCELLOR WITH UTMOST RESPECT.

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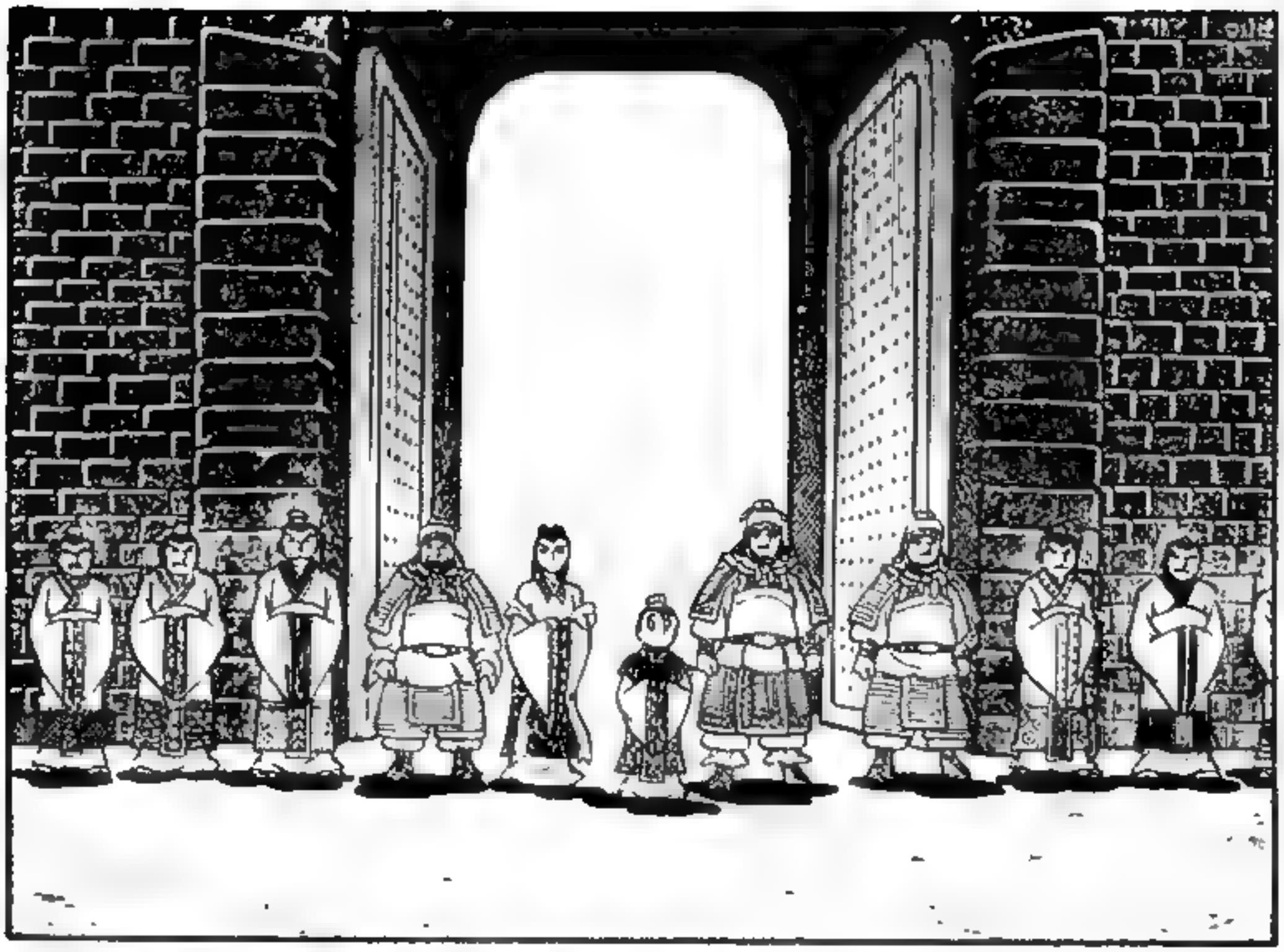
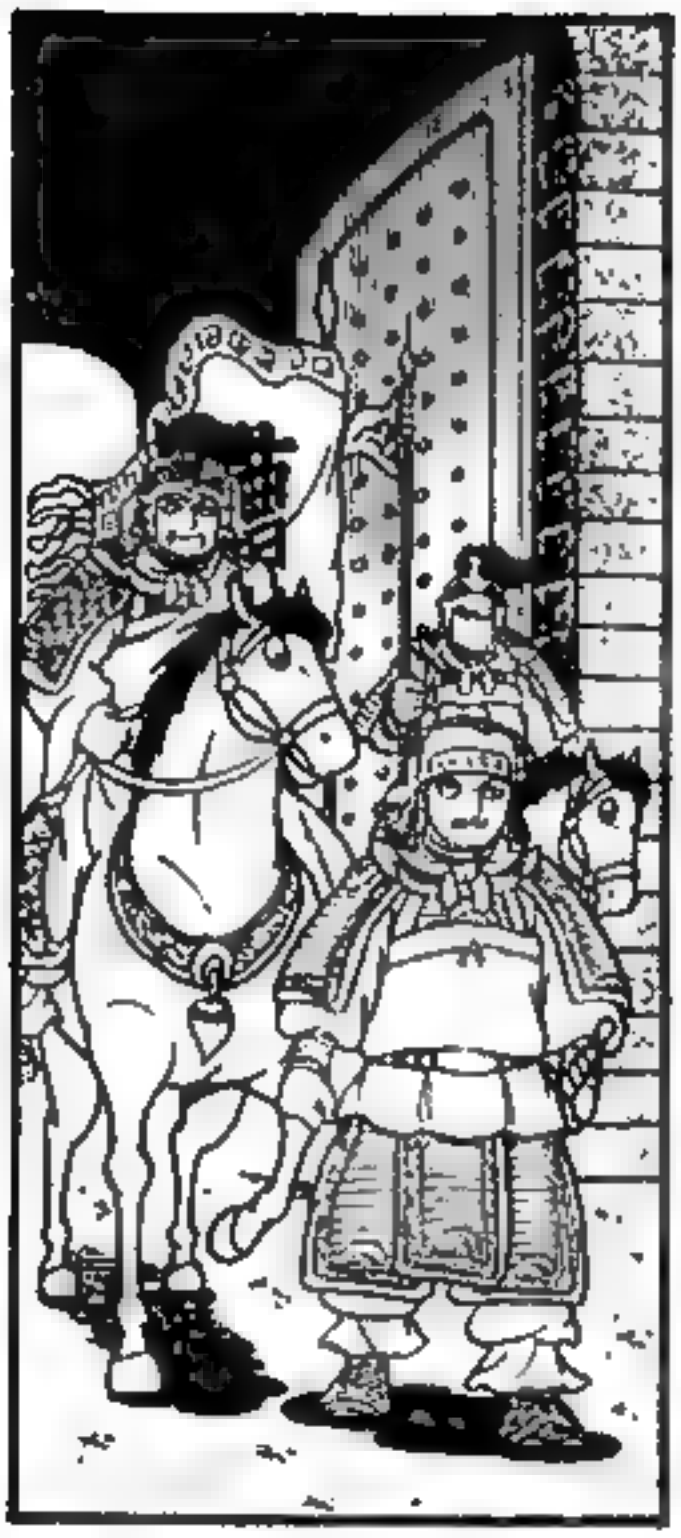
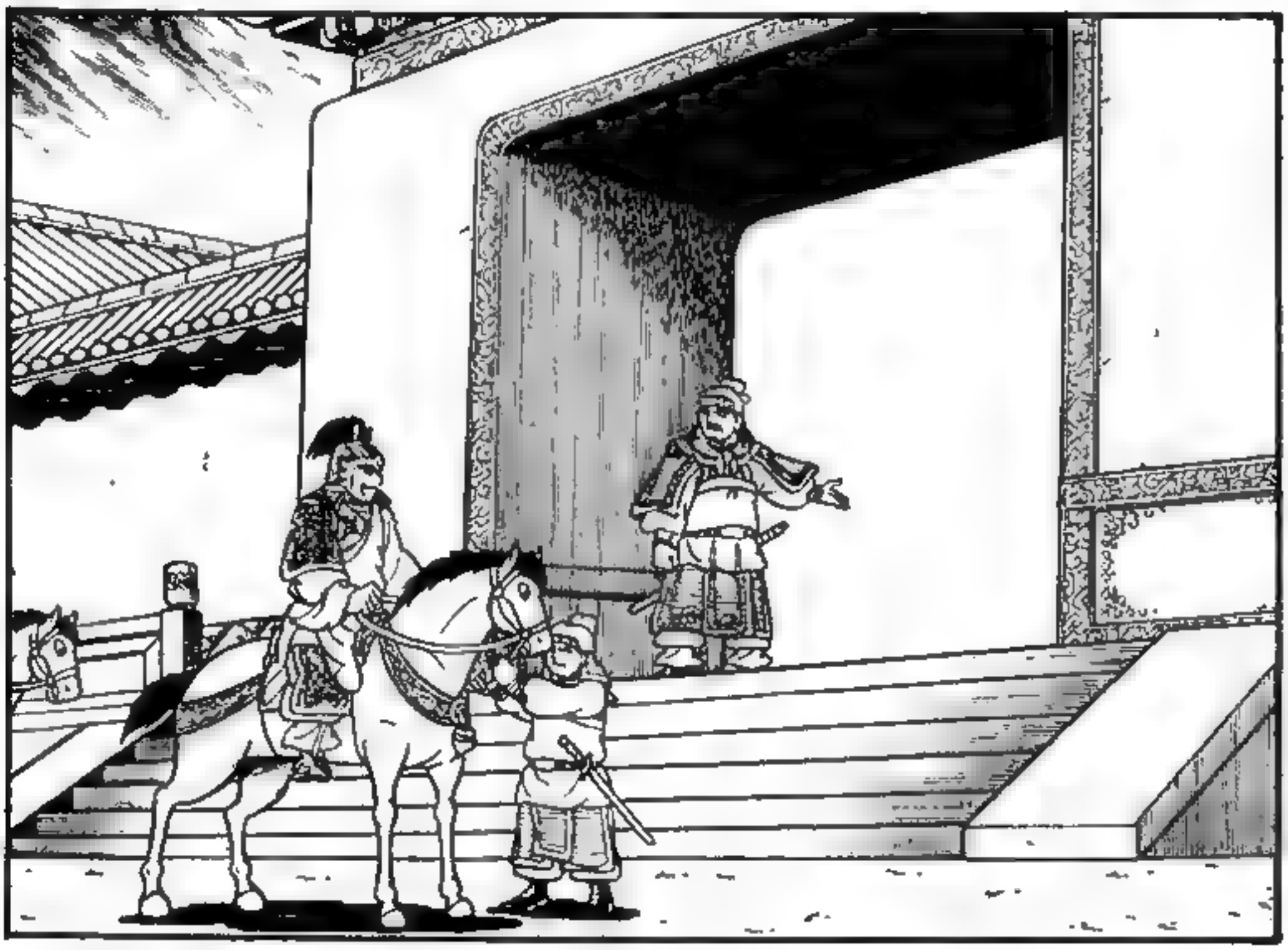


I THANK YOU FOR THE KIND WELCOME.



YES, CHAN-
CELLOR
LEAD THE
WAY
INSIDE
THEN.



PLEASE TAKE A SEAT, SIR.

YES.

AS SUCH, I SHALL FORMALLY RECOGNIZE LIU CONG AS THE RIGHTFUL LORD OF JINGZHOU WITHIN DUE TIME.

I'M VERY PLEASED BY YOUR LOYALTY.

BY THE WAY, TELL ME THE STATUS OF JINGZHOU'S FORCES AND SUPPLIES.

THANK YOU, SIR.

AS FOR MONEY AND GRAINS, WE HAVE AN AMPLE STOCK STORED MOSTLY AT JIANGLING.

WE PRESENTLY HAVE 8000 CAVALRY, 200,000 INFANTRY, 100,000 MARINES, AND 7000 SHIPS.

CAI MAO, I HEREBY PLACE YOU AS THE SUPREME ADMIRAL OF MY NAVAL FORCES.

I SEE...

I AM DEEPLY HONOURED, CHANCE-LLOR.

ME? AS THE SUPREME ADMIRAL OF THE NAVY?

AS FOR YOU, LIU CONG, I ORDER YOU TO MOVE TO QINGZHOU AND RULE ITS LANDS AS THE NEW IMPERIAL PROTECTOR.

CONSIDERING YOUR YOUNG AGE, I'M AFRAID STAYING IN THE SOUTH WILL BE MUCH TOO DANGEROUS FOR YOU IN THESE TIMES OF WAR. I SHALL GRANT YOUR WISH WHEN YOU'RE A BIT A OLDER SO BE PATIENT IN THE MEANWHILE.

THANK YOU CHANCELLOR BUT I DO NOT DESIRE ANY SUCH TITLES OR RANKS. I SIMPLY WISH TO LIVE IN THESE LANDS THAT I AM SO FOND OF.

NOW THEN, THE REST OF YOU ARE DISMISSED FOR TODAY.

YES, SIR...

WHY DID YOU BESTOW A MAN LIKE CAI MAO WITH SUCH A HIGH TITLE, CHANCELLOR?

SINCE WE HAIL FROM THE NORTH, OUR ARMIES ARE ADEPT AT WAGING WAR AT LAND BUT NOT ON WATER.

HAHA. THINK A LITTLE, MY FRIEND.

A BRILLIANT IDEA, MY LORD.

THUS, IT'S BEST TO LET CAI MAO TAKE CHARGE OF OUR NAVY FOR THE TIME BEING. ONCE WE'VE ADEQUATELY FAMILIARIZED OURSELVES WITH NAVAL WARFARE, I CAN DO AS I LIKE WITH CAI MAO.

YES?

YU JIN.

UNDER-
STOOD,
SIR.

I HAVE NO NEED FOR A MERE CHILD NOR IS THERE A NEED TO SEND ONE ALL THE WAY TO QINGZHOU. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF MY WORDS, YU JIN?

NOW THEN, LET US FOCUS ON REORGANIZING JINGZHOU'S ARMY AND STATE OF AFFAIRS.

AS THE CHANCELLOR PROMISED, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO RETURN TO JINGZHOU AS ITS LORD WHEN YOU'RE OLDER.

MOTHER, MUST I REALLY GO ALL THE WAY TO QINGZHOU?

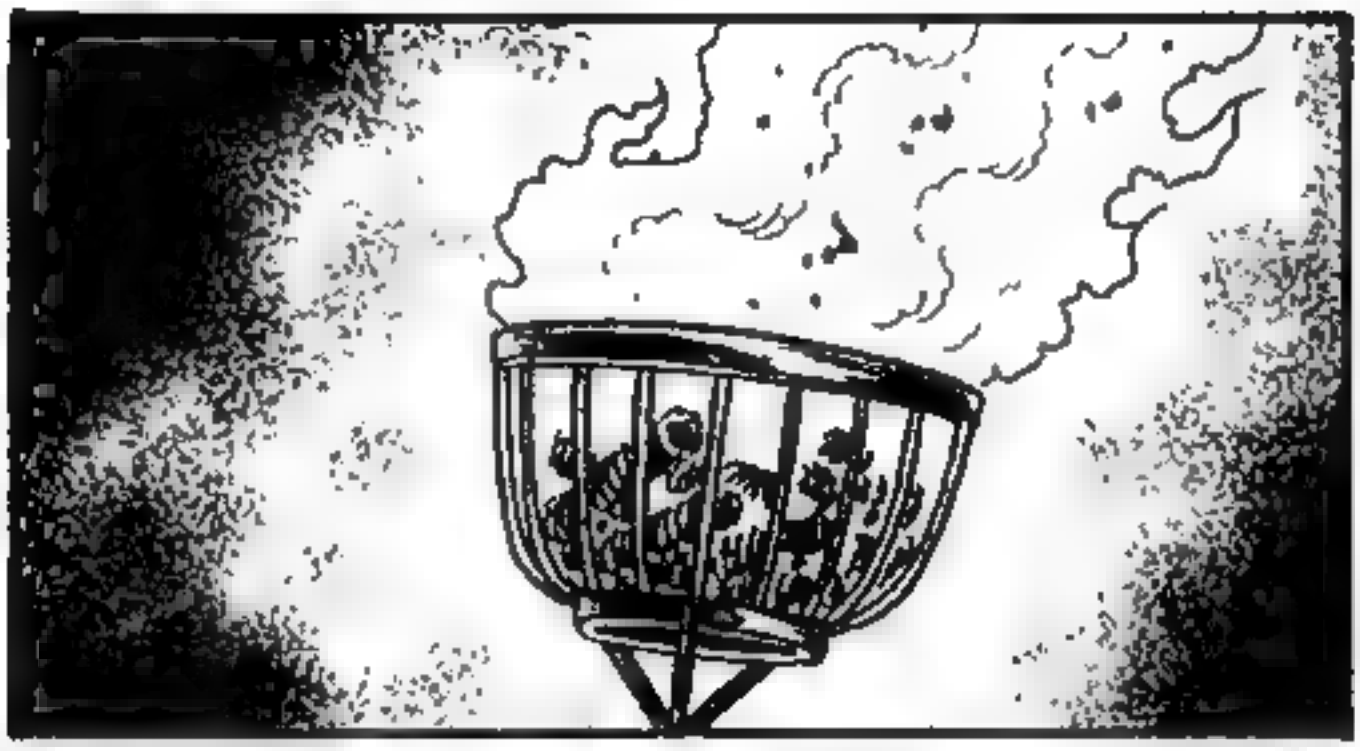
YOU'LL BE BACK BEFORE YOU KNOW IT.

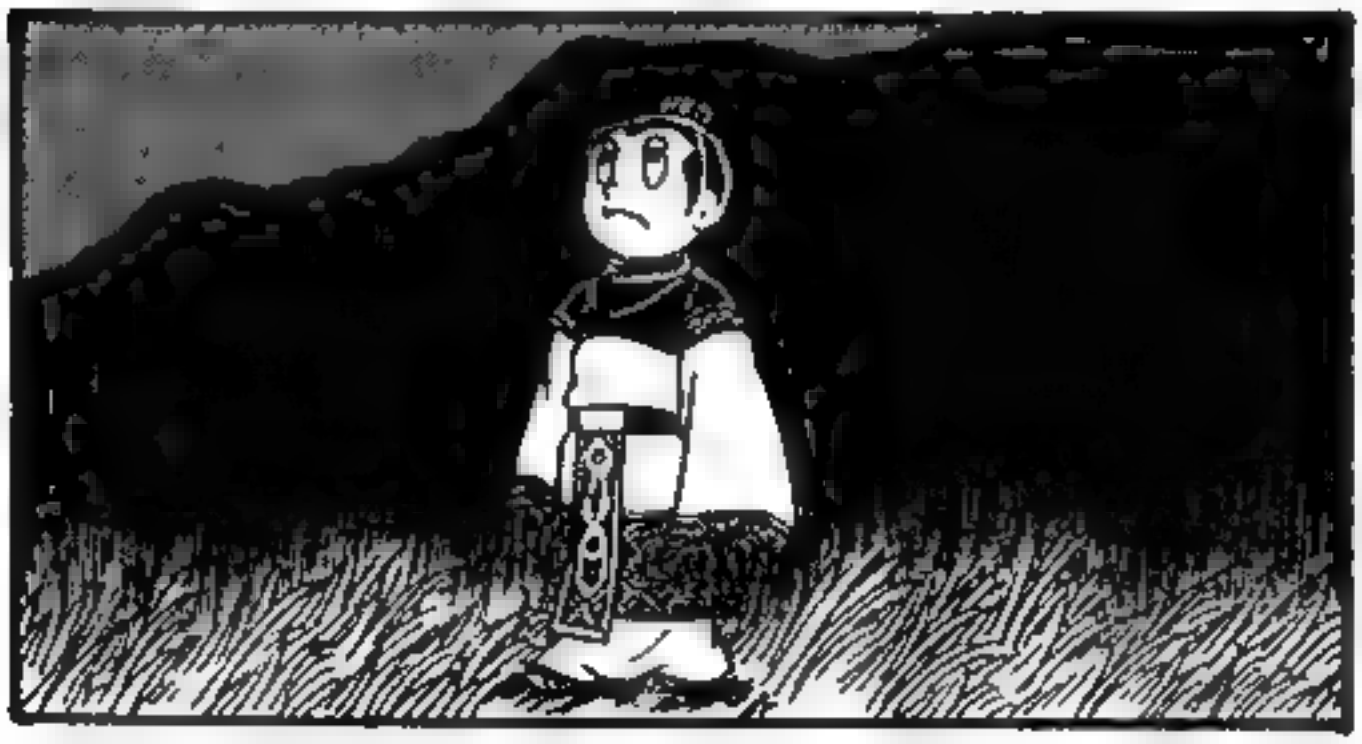
BUT I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE HOME...

SIR! LIU CONG HAS JUST LEFT FOR QINGZHOU.

IS THAT SO?

THEN LET US BE OFF, MEN!





WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUTSIDE, MY CHILD?

THAT'S NOT BECOMING OF A FUTURE LORD. YOU MUST STAY STRONG.
I WAS JUST FEELING A LITTLE NOSTALGIC, THAT'S ALL, MOTHER.

HM?

?

YES, MOTHER.

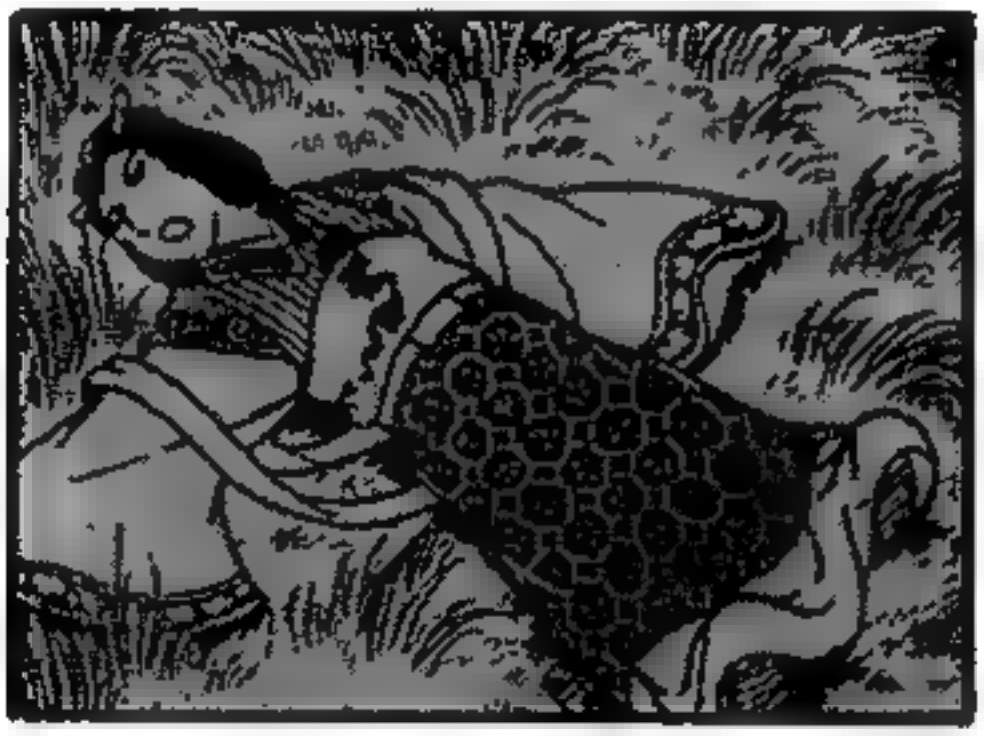
NOW GO BACK TO BED. WE'VE GOT A LONG JOURNEY AHEAD OF US.

?

?

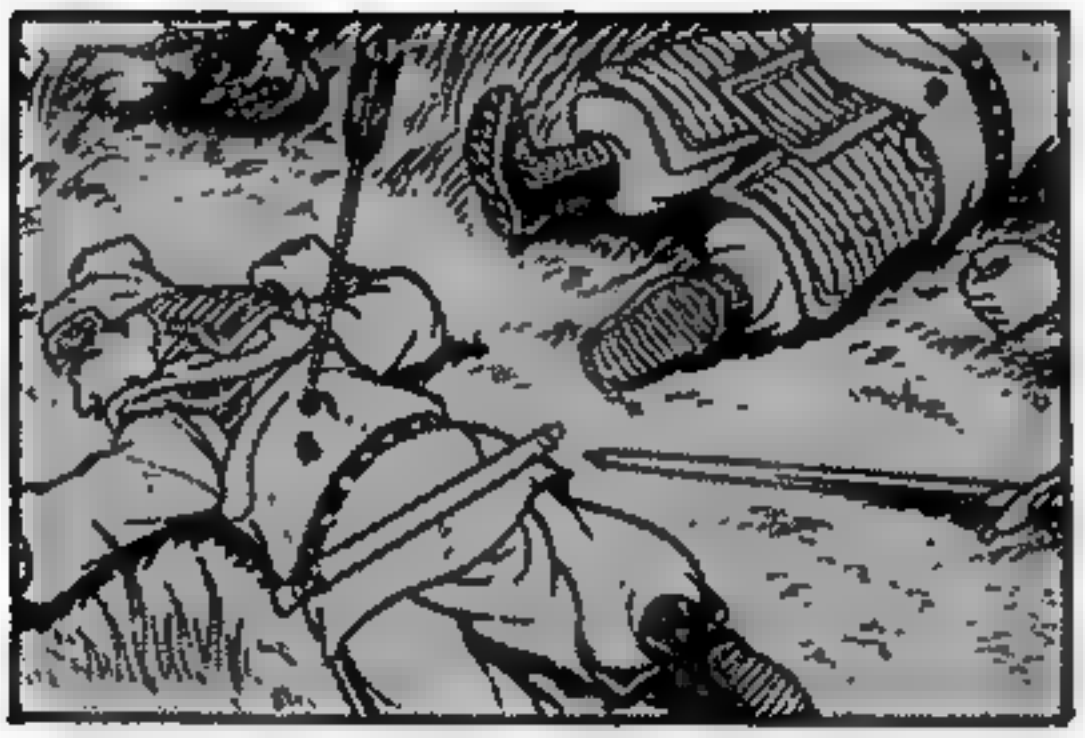
WHAT ON EARTH...!?

GAHH!

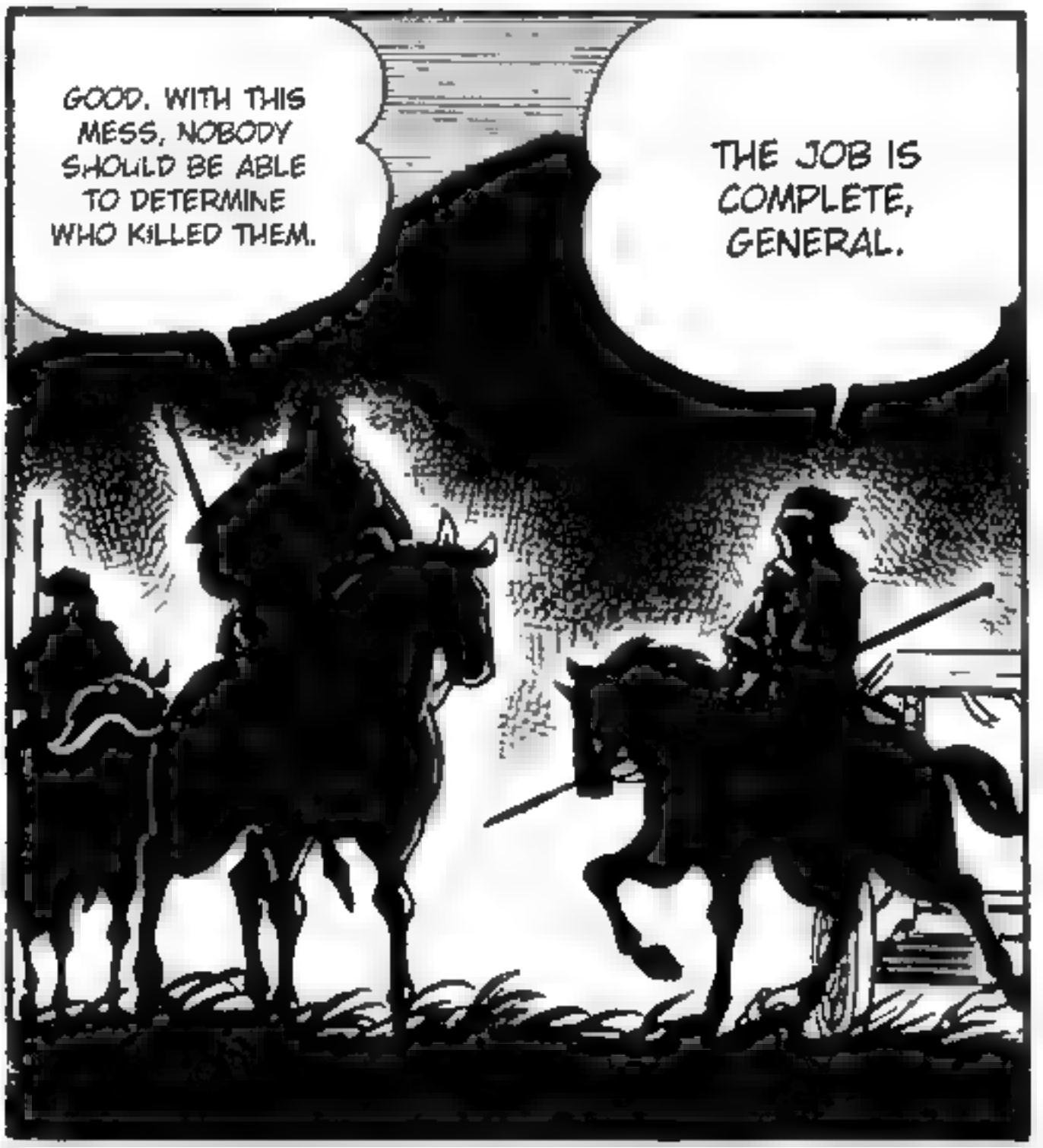


N-NO, PLEASE!
I'M AFRAID I CAN'T LET YOU LIVE, LIU CONG.

KILL EVERY LAST PERSON!



NOW LET US RETURN!


GOOD. WITH THIS MESS, NOBODY SHOULD BE ABLE TO DETERMINE WHO KILLED THEM.
THE JOB IS COMPLETE, GENERAL.

BATTLE OF CHANGBAN

MAKE SURE THE NEW POSTS FOR JINGZHOU'S MINISTERS WILL SCATTER THEM TO SEPARATE LOCATIONS.

YES, THAT SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA.

MAY I SUGGEST THE CHANCELLOR TAKE A BRIEF BREAK FROM STATE AFFAIRS WITH A CUP OF TEA?

AHHH... A CUP OF TEA AMIDST WORK IS EXCEPTIONALLY PLEASANT.

THERE'S ACTUALLY A MORE URGENT PROBLEM THAT I BELIEVE SHOULD BE DEALT WITH FIRST.

BY THE WAY, HAS THE TAX PROBLEM BEEN SETTLED YET?

NO, BUT WITH ALL THE REFUGEES THAT LIU BEI HAS, WE CAN PURSUE THEM ANYTIME.

THAT, OF COURSE, IS LIU BEI AND HIS FLEEING FORCES. SURELY YOU DON'T INTEND TO LET THEM ESCAPE, CHANCELLOR?

BUT IF THEY WERE TO MAKE IT TO JIANGLING...

AS ADMIRAL CAI MAO SAID BEFORE, JIANGLING IS ONE OF JINGZHOU'S BEST FORTRESSES WITH AN AMPLE STOCK OF MONEY AND GRAINS. IT WOULD BE QUITE PROBLEMATIC IF LIU BEI WERE TO TAKE POSSESSION OF IT.

YOU'RE RIGHT. REORGANIZING JINGZHOU'S FORCES IS IMPORTANT BUT SO IS LIU BEI AS WELL.

HMM...

YES, SIR.
SEND OUT AN ARMY RIGHT AWAY.

THERE HASN'T BEEN ANY NEWS FROM GUAN YU EVER SINCE HE LEFT FOR JIANGXIA TO REQUEST REINFORCEMENTS...

WE'RE ONLY HALF WAY THERE, MY LORD.

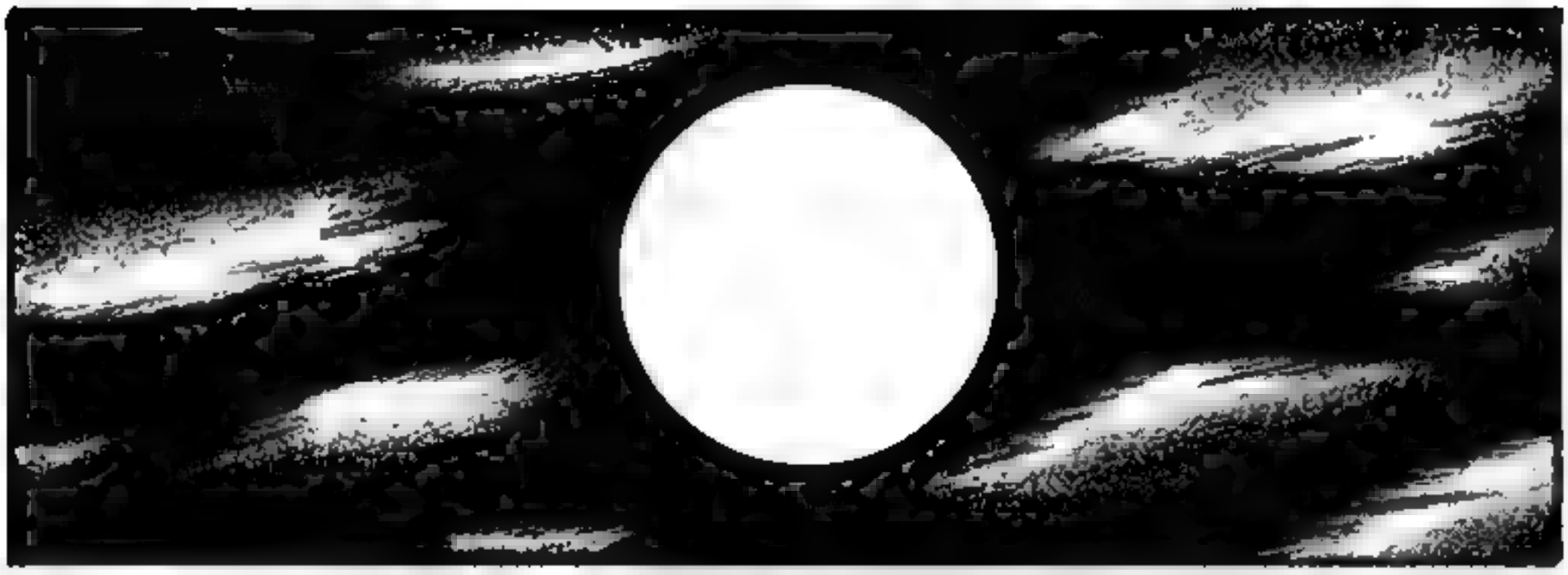
KONGMING, HOW MUCH FARTHER UNTIL WE REACH JIANGLING?

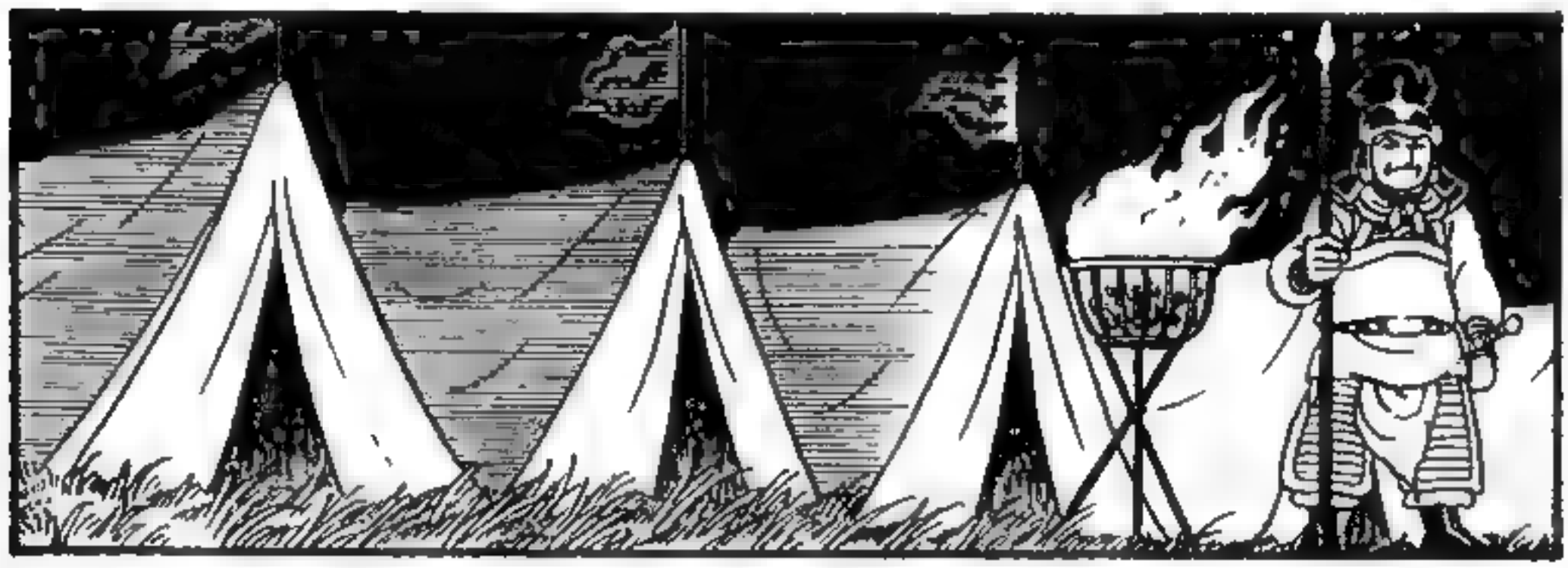
SEEING AS HOW LIU QI IS OUR ONLY HOPE AT THE MOMENT, I SHALL DO AS YOU ASK.

WOULD YOU PLEASE GO THERE AND HELP ASK LIU QI FOR REINFORCEMENTS?

ALRIGHT, TROOPS! I WANT 500 OF YOU TO ACCOMPANY ME TO JIANGXIA.

I PRAY THAT REINFORCEMENTS WILL COME...





FAME AND FORTUNE SHALL BE BESTOWED UPON THE ONE WHO TAKES LIU BEI'S HEAD!

LIU BEI AND HIS FORCES MUST BE FAST ASLEEP BY NOW.

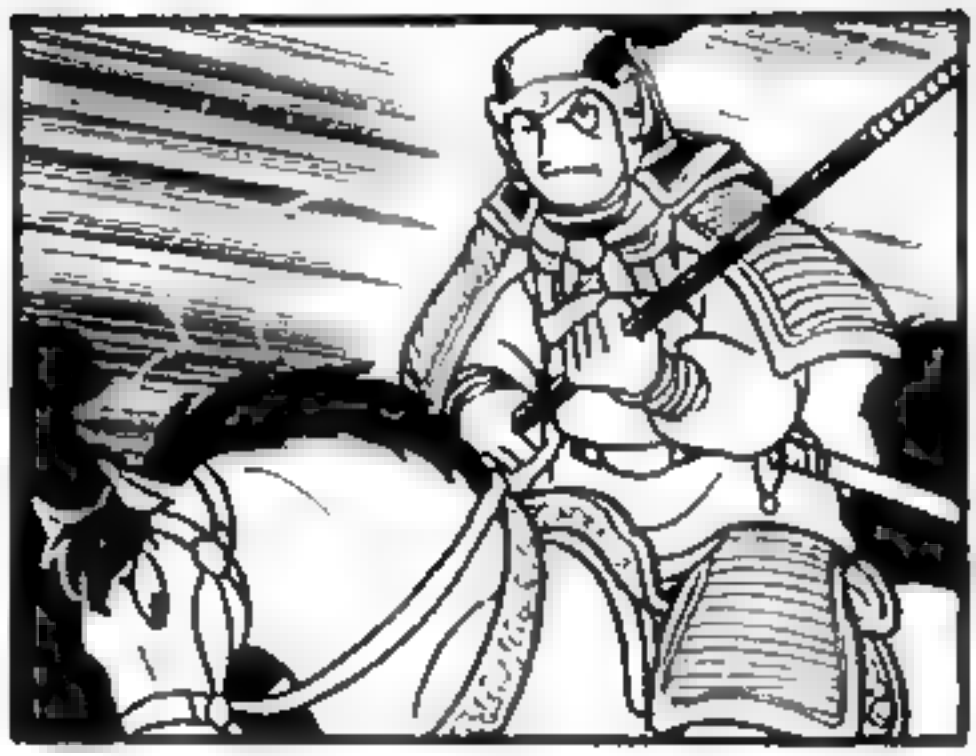
I SEE WE'VE FINALLY CAUGHT UP TO THEM.

WHA?

HM?

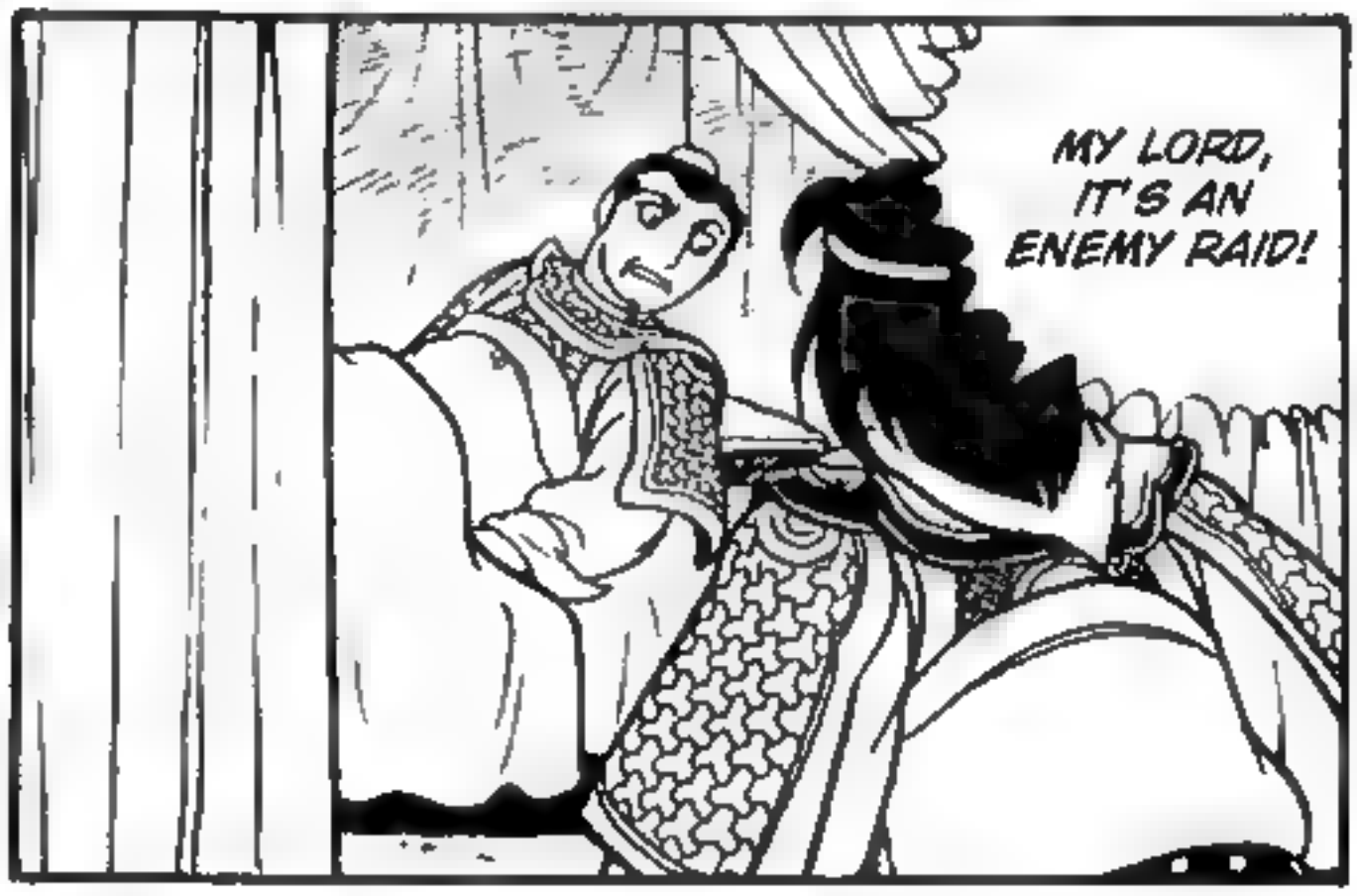
AGHHHH!

KYAA!



SO THEY'VE CAUGHT UP TO US AT LAST, HAVE THEY...

PLEASE FLEE TO THE EAST WHILE I HOLD THEM OFF.

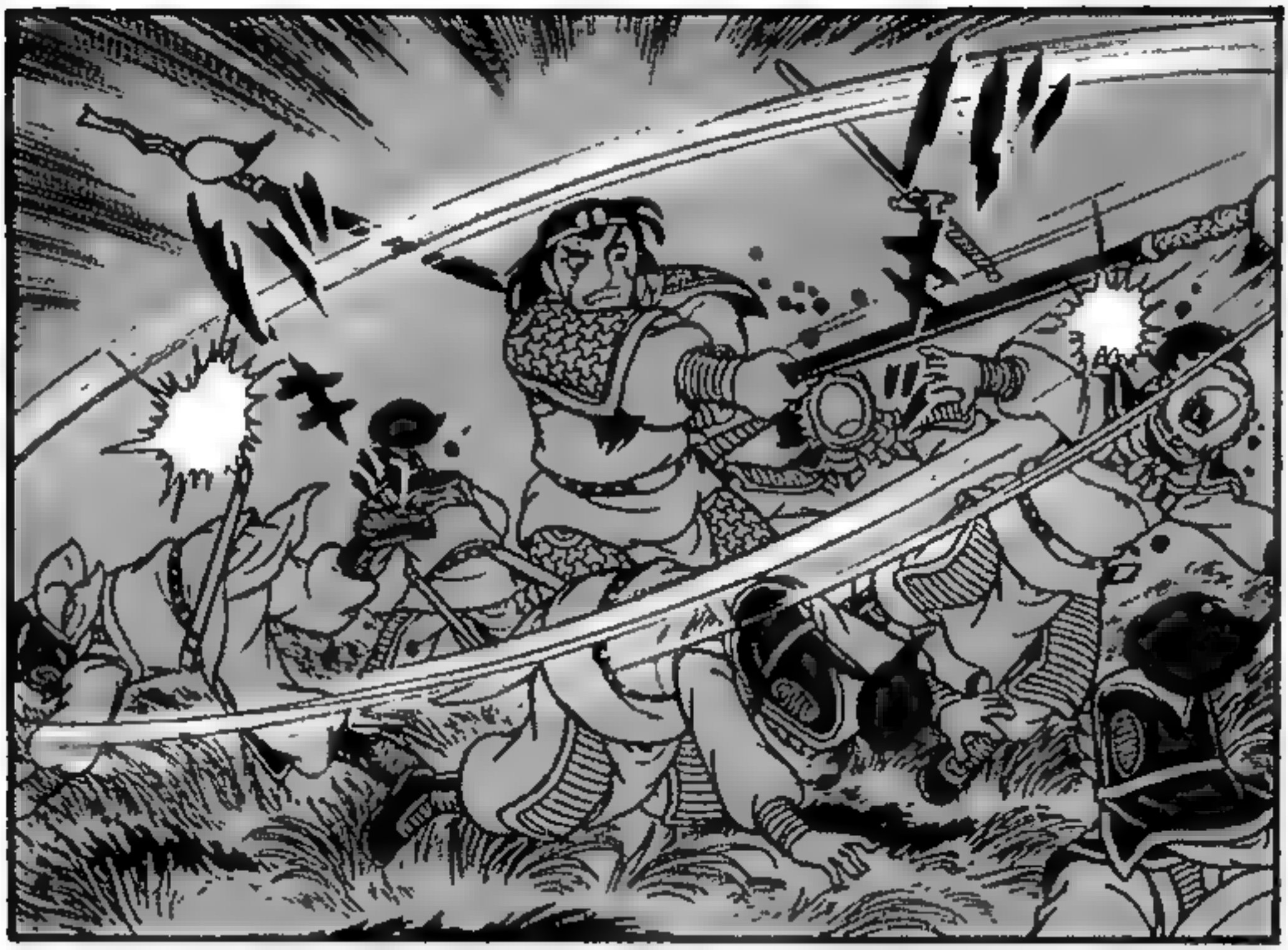

MY LORD, IT'S AN ENEMY RAID!

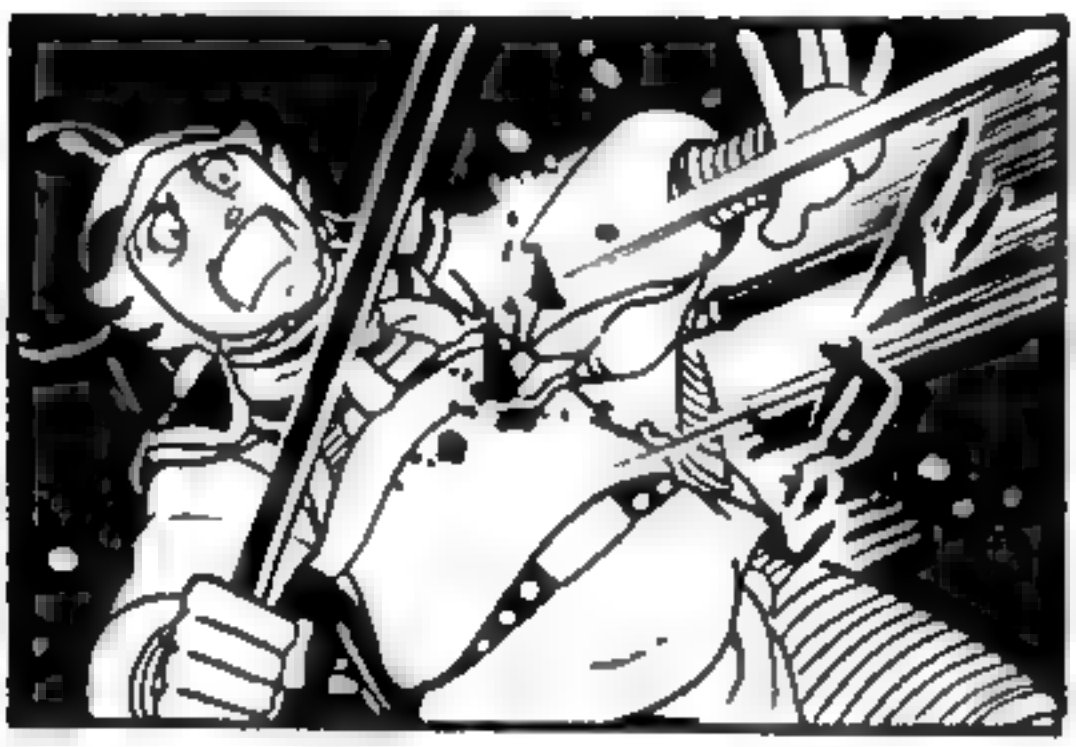
DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE!

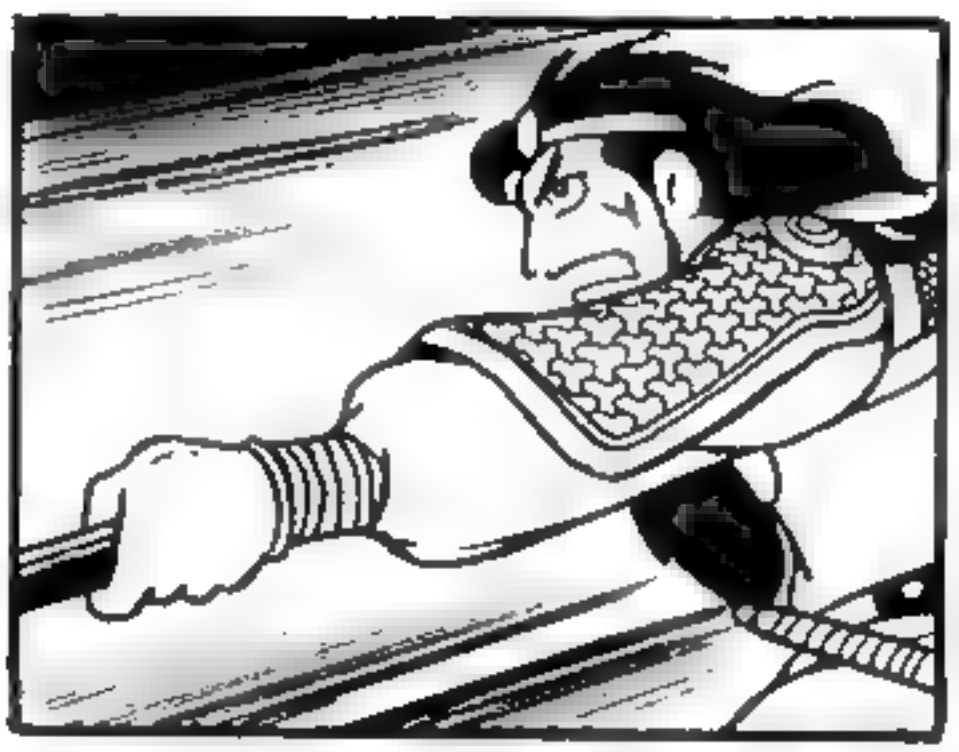
IT'S LIU BEI!

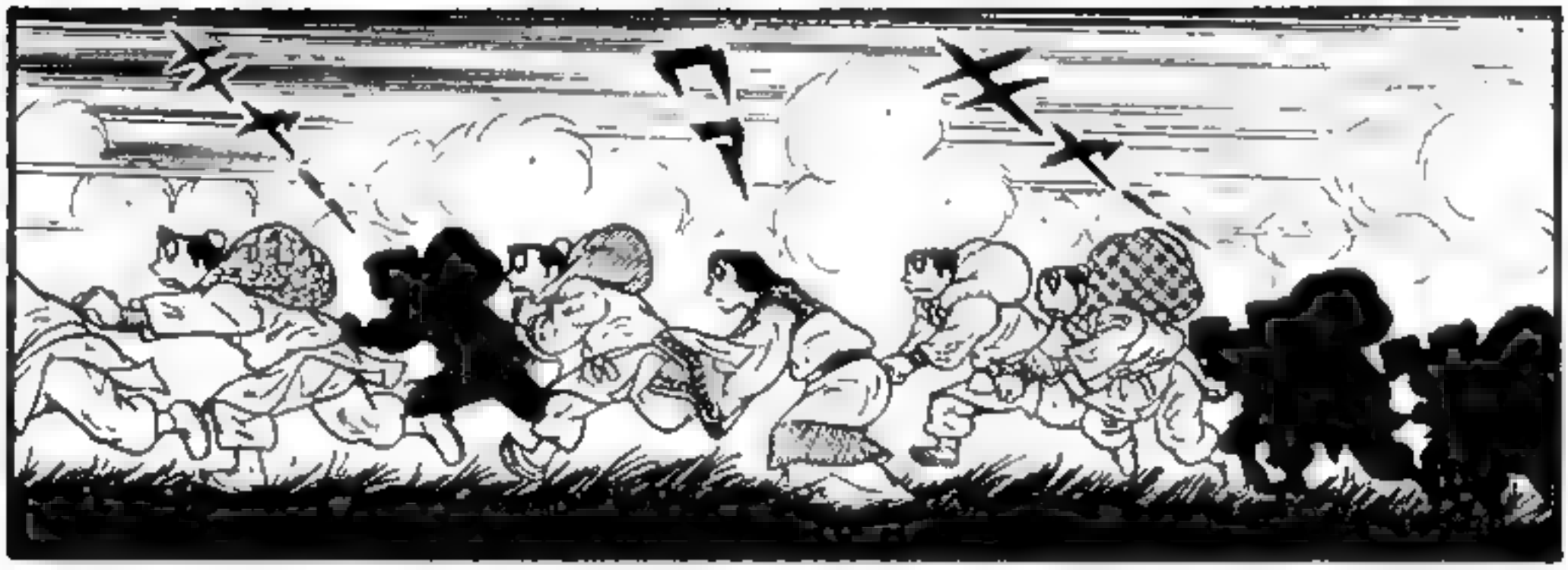
YOU'LL HAVE TO GET PAST ME FIRST!

ビュッ









THEY'RE ALL SCATTERED IN DIFFERENT PLACES AND FIGHTING AGAINST CAO CAO'S FORCES, MY LORD.

WHERE ARE THE REMAINDER OF OUR TROOPS?

MY LORD!

WHAT!?

I'M AFRAID TO INFORM YOU THAT ZHAO YUN ZILONG HAS BETRAYED US AND GONE OVER TO CAO CAO'S SIDE.

BUT I WITNESSED HIM CHARGING STRAIGHT FOR CAO CAO'S ARMY ALONE!

T-THAT'S PRE-POSTEROUS! THE ZHAO ZILONG I KNOW WOULD NEVER DO SUCH A THING!

I REFUSE TO BELIEVE SUCH NONSENSE!

T-THEN WHAT OF MY WIFE AND CHILD WHO WERE PLACED UNDER ZHAO ZILONG'S PROTECTION?

I... I'M AFRAID I DO NOT KNOW.

AS IF THOSE WEAKLINGS COULD EVEN LAY A FINGER ON ME!

AH, ZHANG FEI! IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU MANAGED TO GET AWAY UNHARMED.

BY THE WAY, MI FANG IS CLAIMING THAT ZHAO ZILONG HAS BETRAYED US AND GONE OVER TO CAO CAO'S SIDE.

I SEE, SO HE REALLY DID BETRAY US...

HMM, NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I THINK I SAW HIM RUNNING TOWARDS CAO CAO'S FORCES AS WELL...

AFTER ME, MEN!

THAT TREACHEROUS COWARD...! I'LL TEACH HIM WHAT HAPPENS TO BACK-STABBERS!

THERE'S A RIVER UP AHEAD, SIR.

I WANT YOU MEN TO HIDE BEHIND IN THE FOREST AND HAVE YOUR HORSES WALK BACK AND FORTH WITH A BUNDLE OF BRANCHES TIED TO THEIR TAILS.

YES.

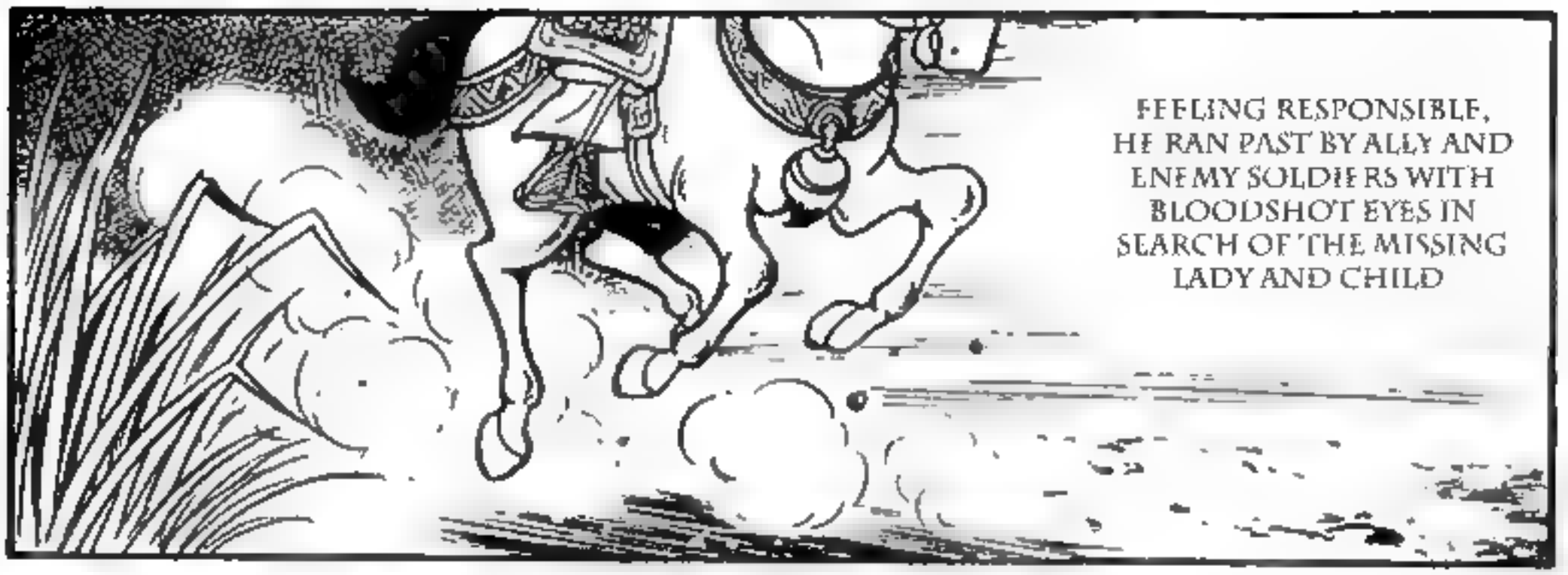
YOU MEAN LIKE THIS, SIR?

*STONE SLAB (長坡橋) READS CHANGBAN BRIDGE

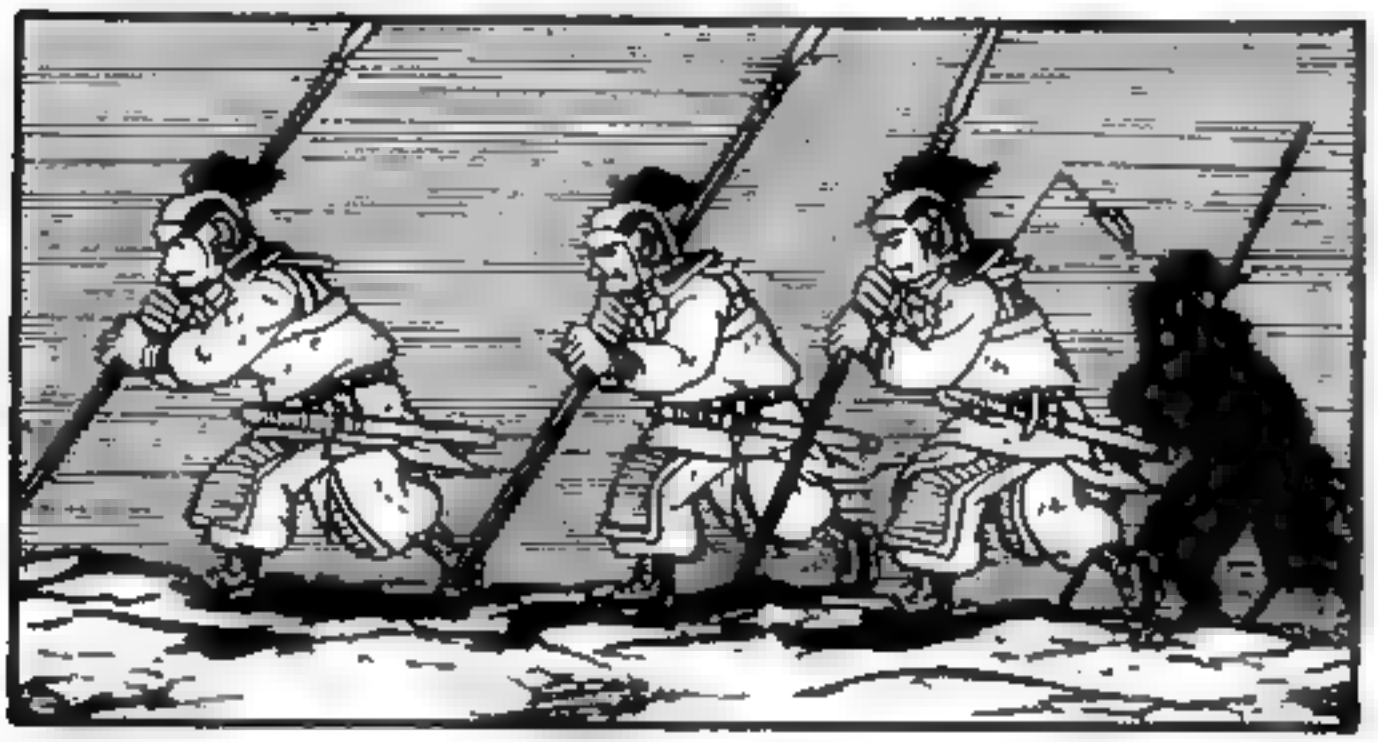
WITH THE RUSTLING OF THE BRANCHES, IT'LL SEEM LIKE THERE ARE 4-500 SOLDIERS HIDING IN THE FOREST FOR AN AMBUSH.
AND THIS NARROW BRIDGE WILL PROVIDE THE PERFECT SPACE TO FEND OFF ENEMIES ALL BY MYSELF.

MEANWHILE, THE RUMOURED TRAITOR ZHAO ZILONG WAS FRANTICALLY RUNNING ACROSS THE FIELDS OF CHANGBAN.

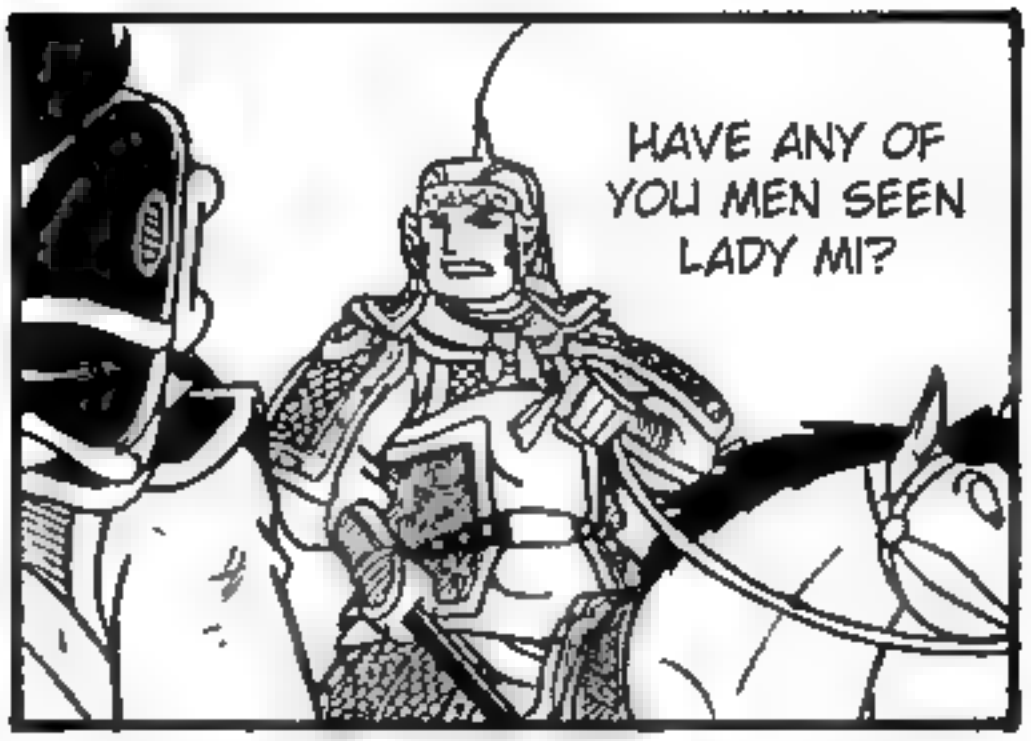
ALTHOUGH HE HAD BEEN TASKED WITH PROTECTING LIU BEI'S WIFE AND CHILD, ZHAO ZILONG HAD LOST SIGHT OF THEM AFTER FIGHTING OFF THE ENEMIES DURING THE RAID.


FEELING RESPONSIBLE, HE RAN PAST BY ALLY AND ENEMY SOLDIERS WITH BLOODSHOT EYES IN SEARCH OF THE MISSING LADY AND CHILD

MILADY! WHERE ARE YOU, LADY MI!?

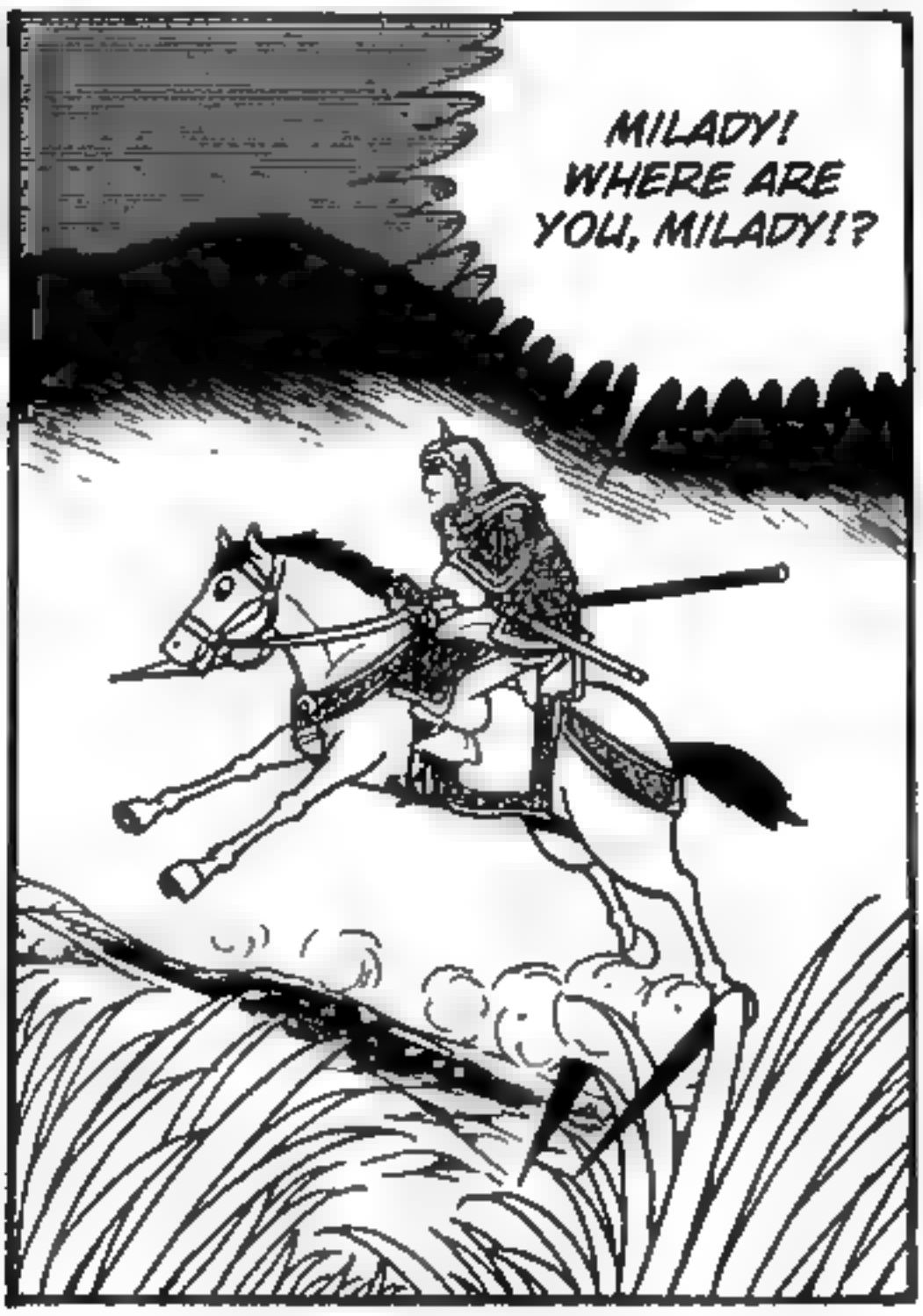


I DID, SIR.


HAVE ANY OF YOU MEN SEEN LADY MI?

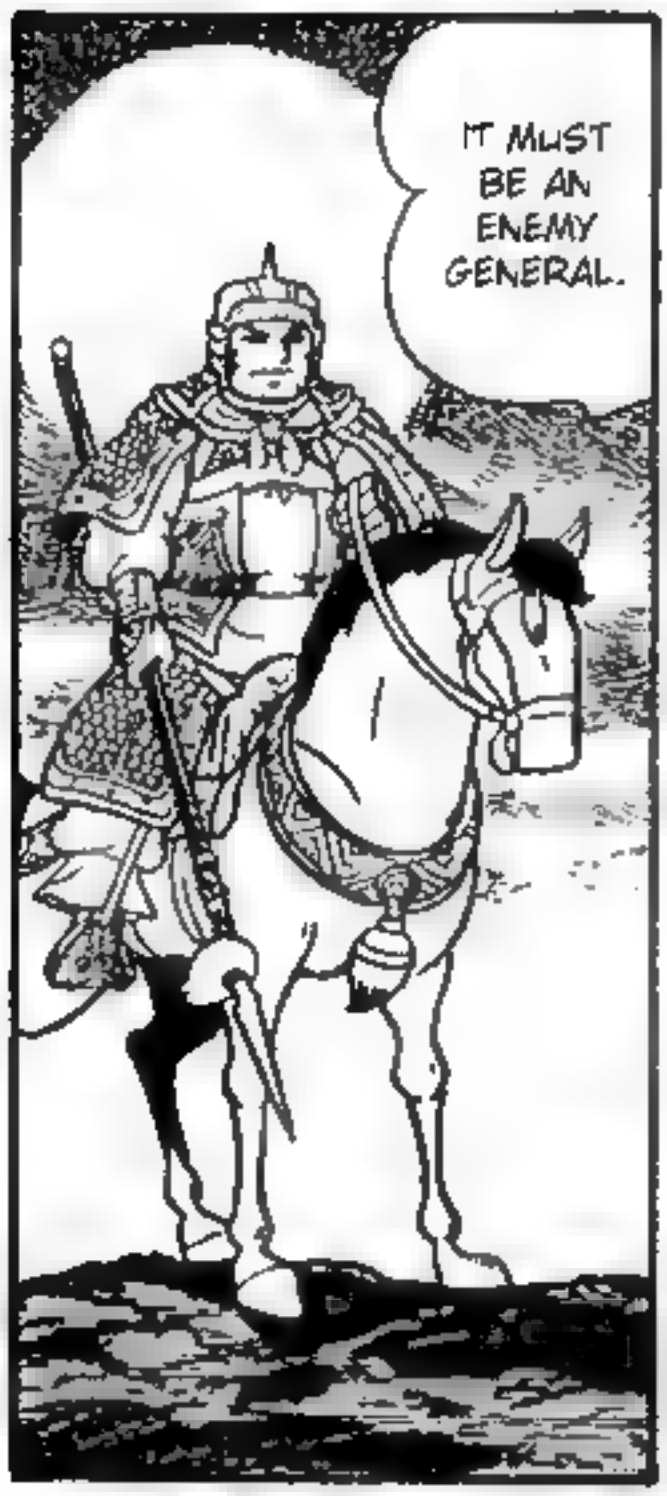
SHE RAN THAT WAY, SIR.
I SAW HER WITH HER HAIR DOWN AND RUNNING AMONGST THE OTHER FLEEING PEASANTS.

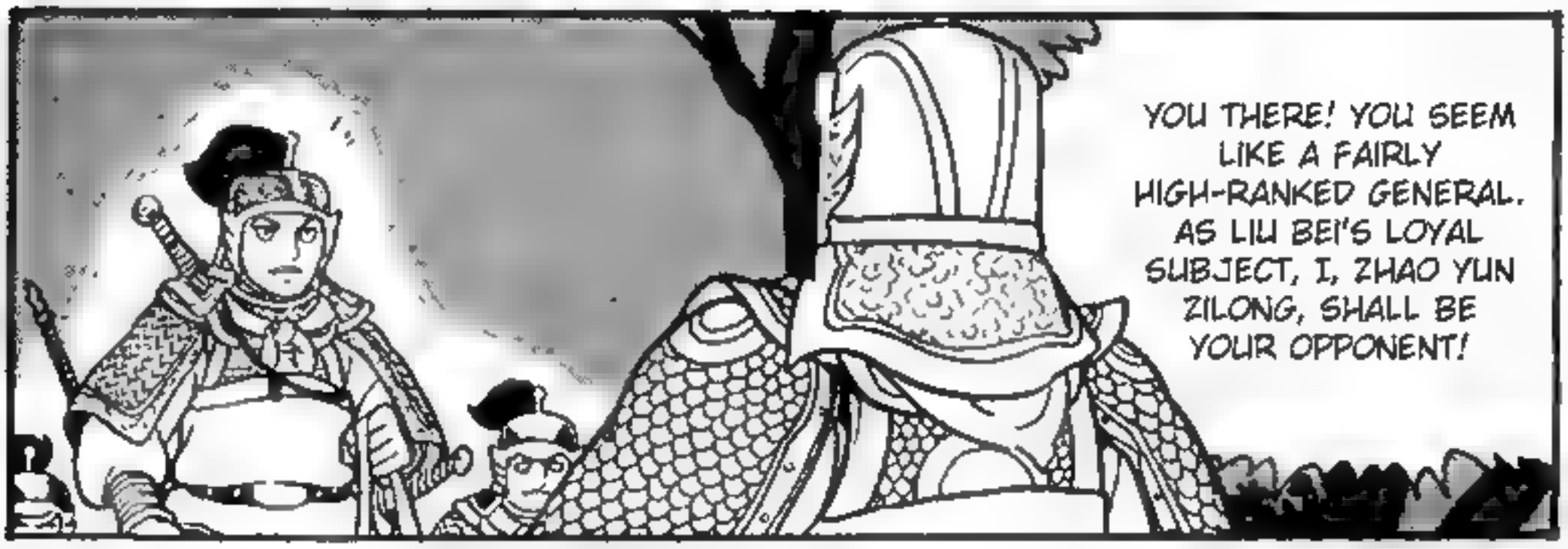
WHERE!?


MILADY! WHERE ARE YOU, MILADY!?

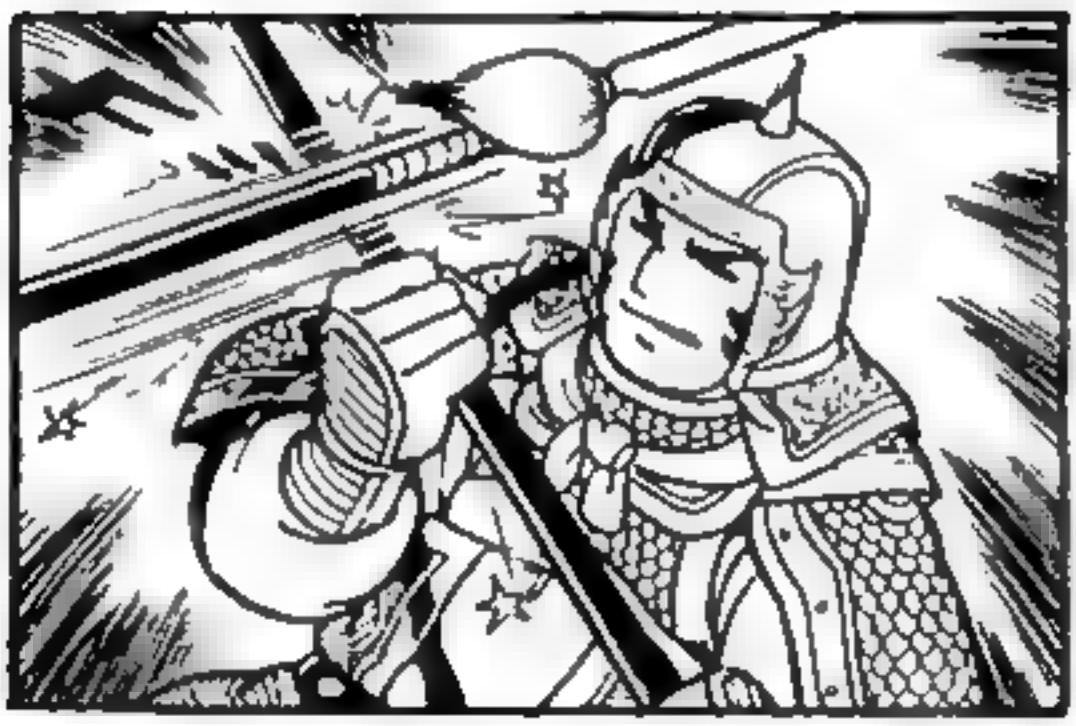
GIDDY UP!

HM?


IT MUST BE AN ENEMY GENERAL.

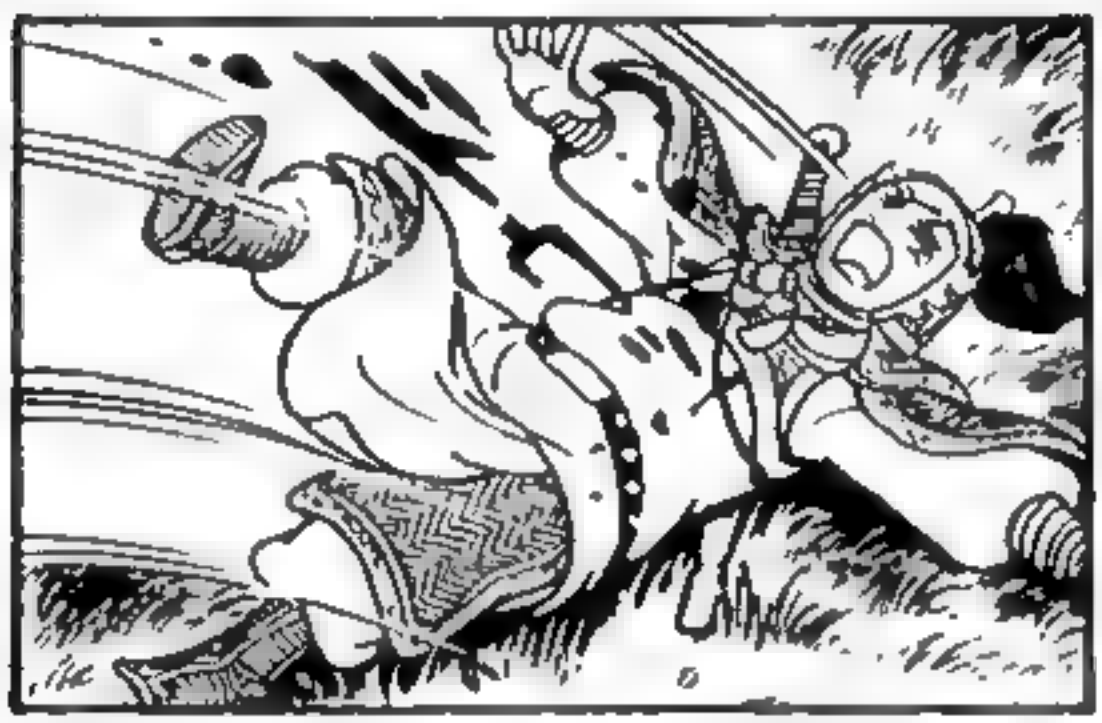

YOU THERE! YOU SEEM LIKE A FAIRLY HIGH-RANKED GENERAL. AS LIU BEI'S LOYAL SUBJECT, I, ZHAO YUN ZILONG, SHALL BE YOUR OPPONENT!

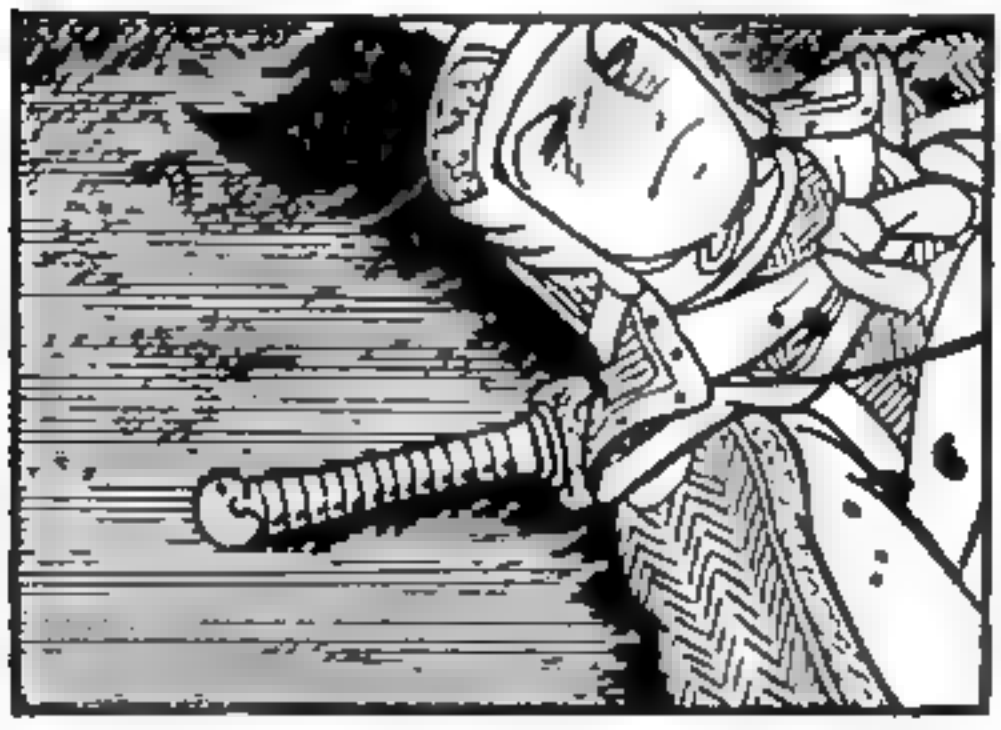
PROTECT THE GENERAL!



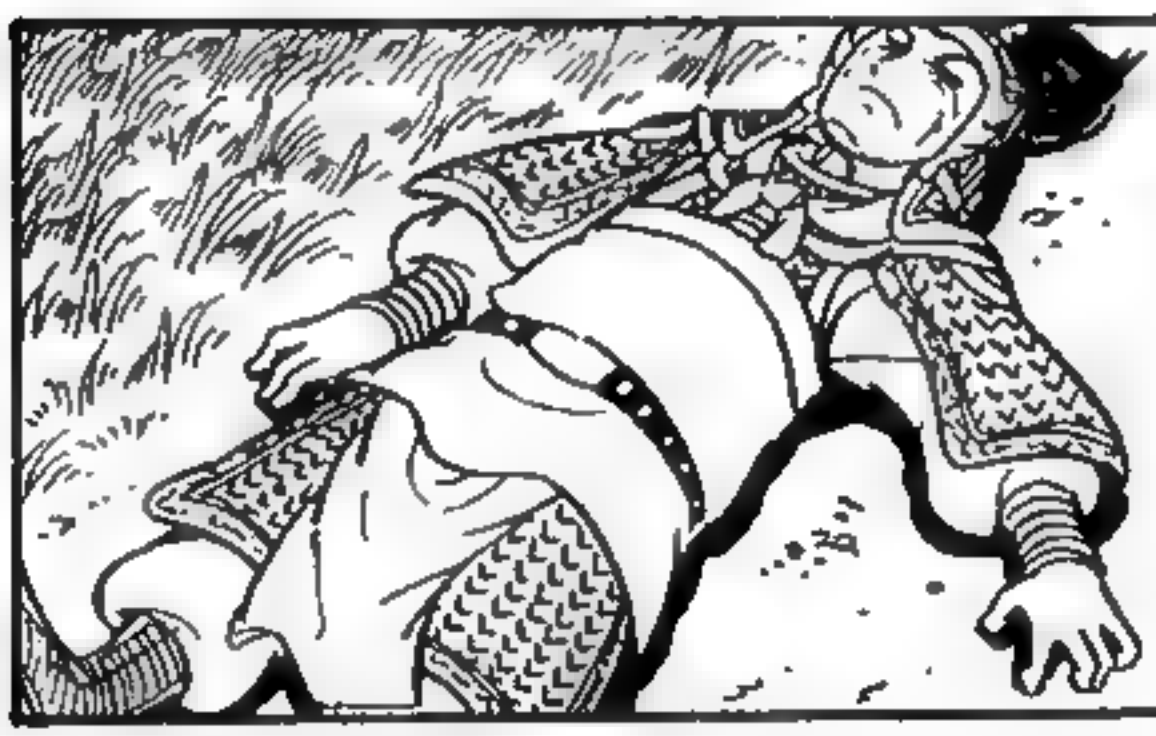
TAKE THIS!

THIS IS HOW YOU USE A SPEAR!





HM?



IT IS SAID THAT CAO CAO HAD TWO PRIZED SWORDS CALLED, "*TRUST OF GOD*" AND "*BLUE BLADE*" ADORING XIAHOU EN GREATLY, CAO CAO BESTOWED XIAHOU EN WITH THE *BLUE BLADE* WHILE CAO CAO HIMSELF CARRIED *TRUST OF GOD* AT HIS SIDE.

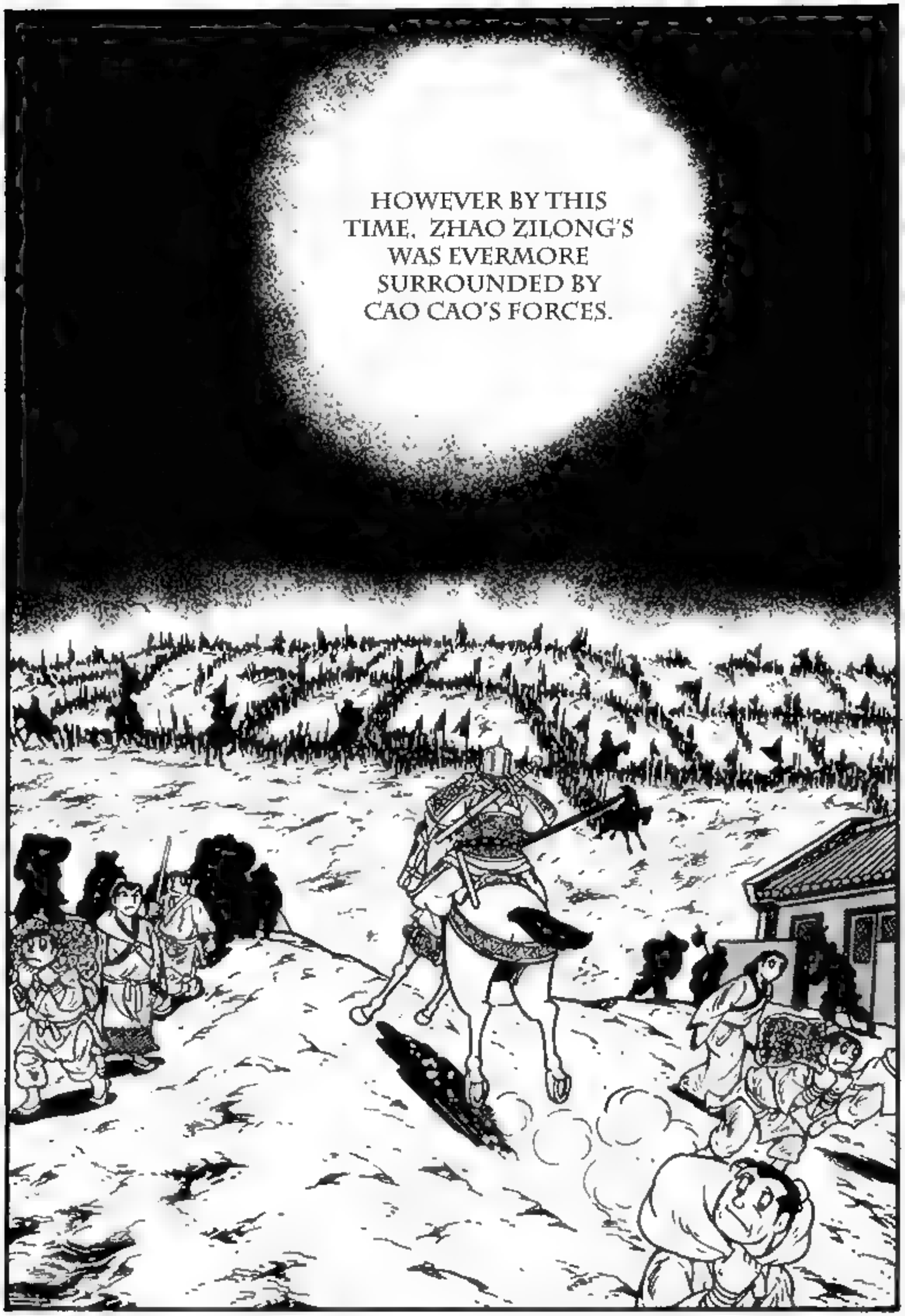
*ALTERNATE NAME FOR BLUE BLADE IS SWORD OF LIGHT
ALTERNATE NAME FOR TRUST OF GOD IS SWORD OF HEAVEN

I SHALL THINK OF IT AS HEAVEN'S GIFT AND TAKE IT.

TO THINK I'D OBTAIN SUCH A MARVELOUS SWORD IN A PLACE LIKE THIS...

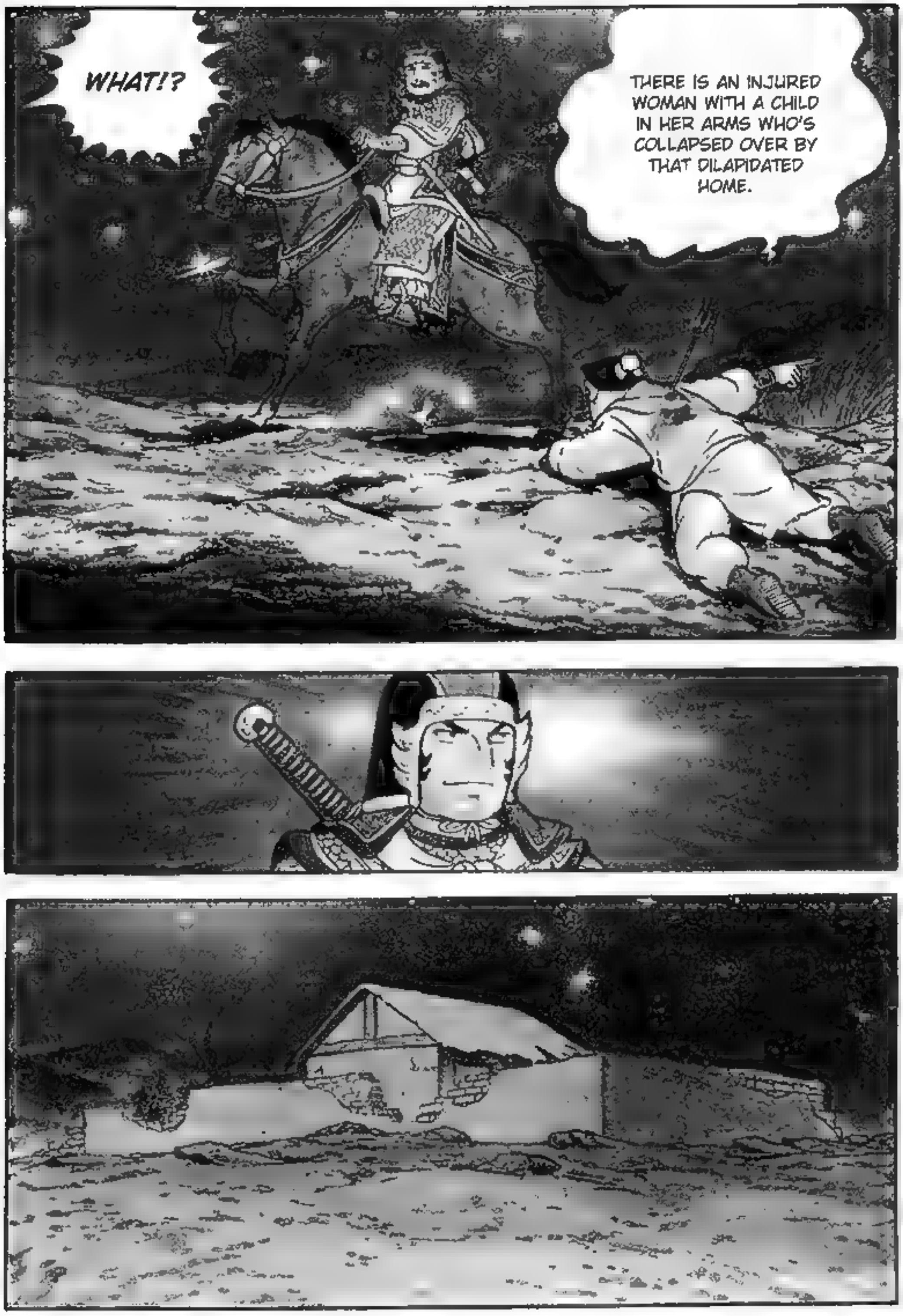
I'VE WASTED TOO MUCH TIME. I NEED TO HURRY UP AND FIND MILADY AND HER CHILD.

MILADY!


HOWEVER BY THIS TIME, ZHAO ZILONG'S WAS EVERMORE SURROUNDED BY CAO CAO'S FORCES.

MILADY!
WHERE ARE
YOU, MILADY!

G...
GENERAL...


WHAT!?
THERE IS AN INJURED WOMAN WITH A CHILD IN HER ARMS WHO'S COLLAPSED OVER BY THAT DILAPIDATED HOME.

IS ANYBODY HERE!?

AH, GENERAL!

PLEASE TAKE THIS CHILD TO MY HUSBAND.

MILADY!

I'M AFRAID I CANNOT WALK ANYMORE.

THAT WAS MY INTENTION ALL ALONG. NOW PLEASE STAND UP, MILADY. I MUST BRING YOU BACK TO MY LORD AS WELL.

LOOK.

TRUE, BUT I SHAN'T BE ABLE TO WALK WITH MY LEG LIKE THIS.

PAINFUL AS IT MAY BE, IT IS NO LIFE-THREATENING WOUND, MILADY.

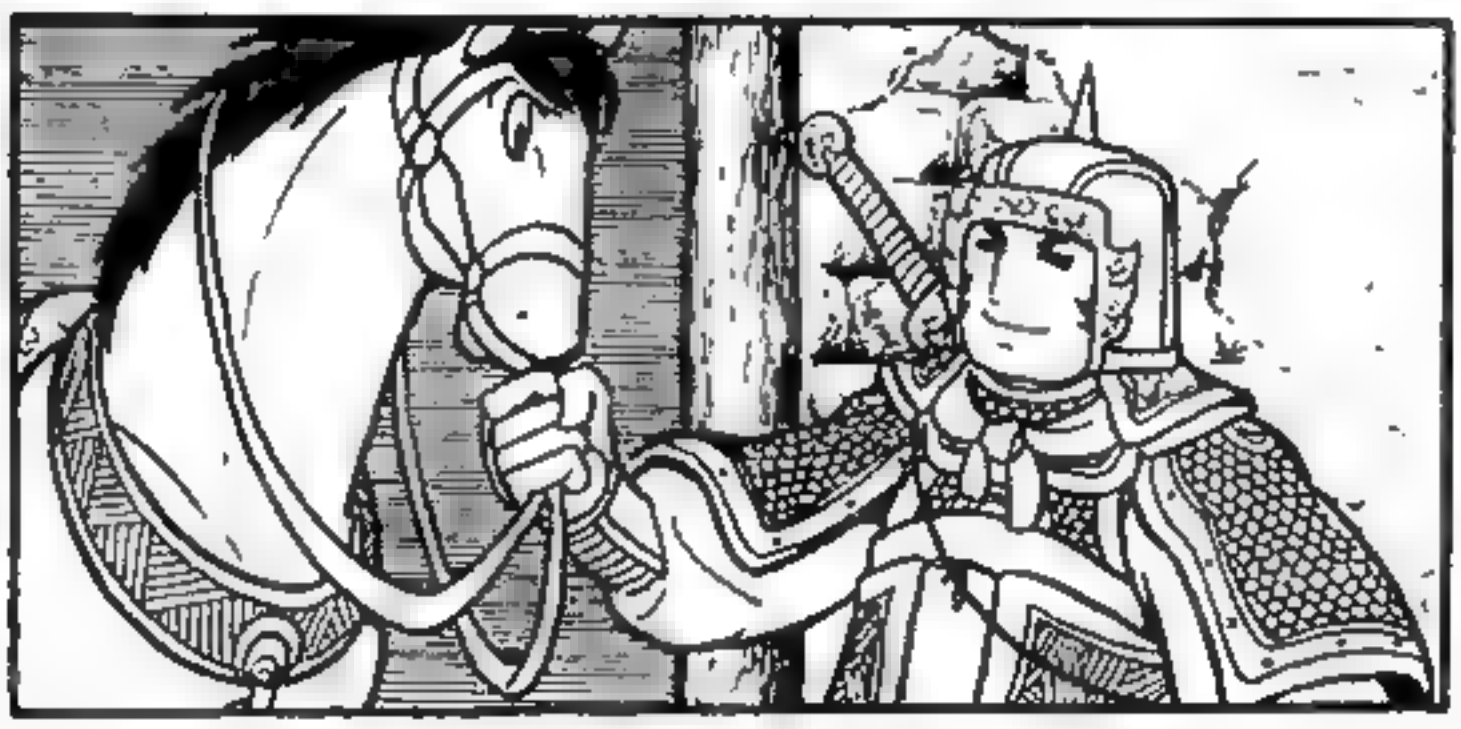
IF I WERE TO TAKE YOUR HORSE, YOU WOULD HAVE TO FACE THE ENTIRE ENEMY ARMY ALONE ON FOOT WITH A BABY IN YOUR ARMS.

NO WORRIES FOR I HAVE A HORSE.

EVEN SO, I CANNOT JUST LEAVE MILADY HERE TO DIE.

TO SURVIVE THAT IS A FEAT IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVEN YOU, GENERAL ZHAO ZILONG.

I WILL NOT TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER. I SHALL BRING MY HORSE HERE
SEE, THE ENEMIES WILL BE HERE ANY MOMENT NOW. YOU MUST LEAVE RIGHT AWAY.

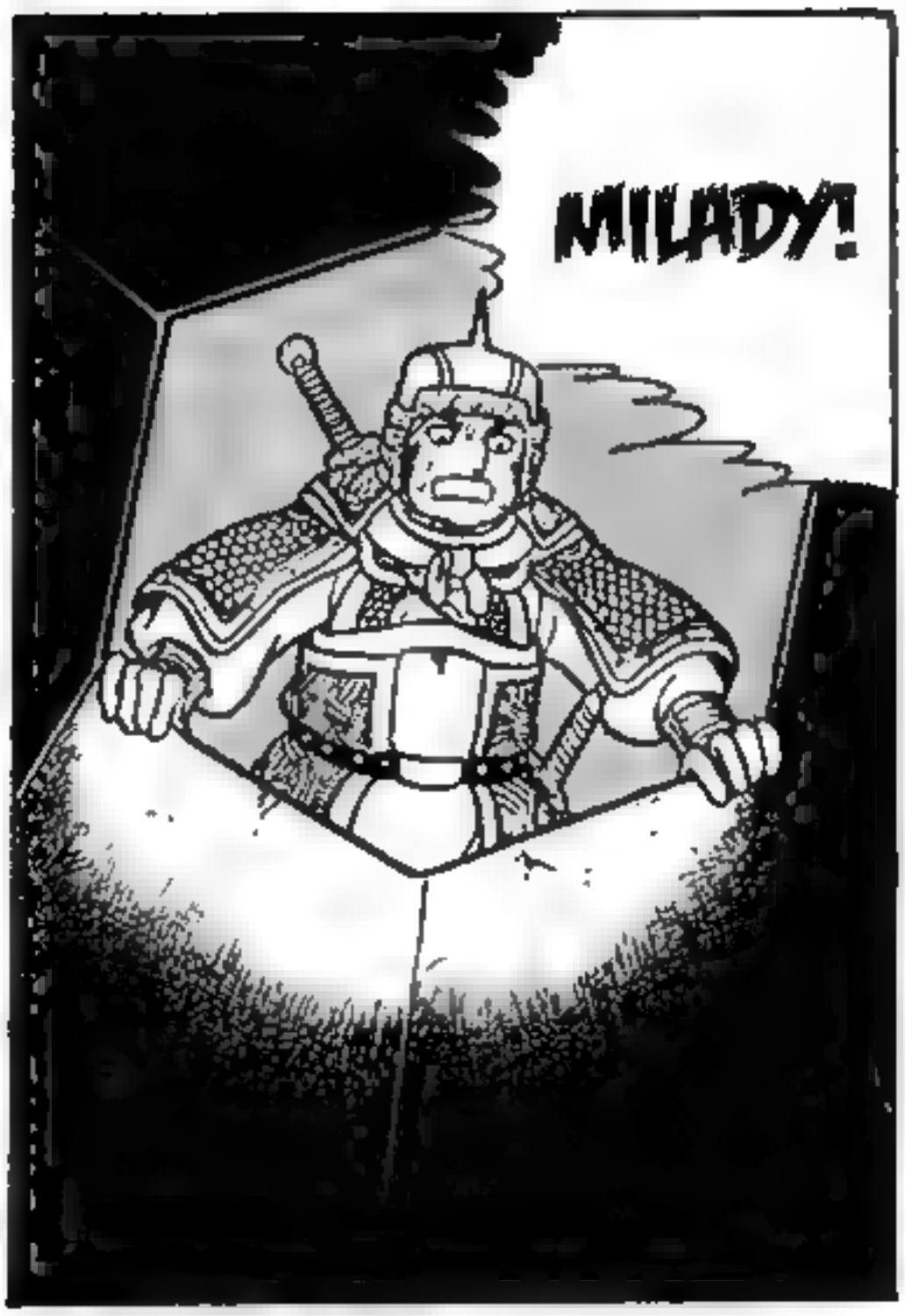


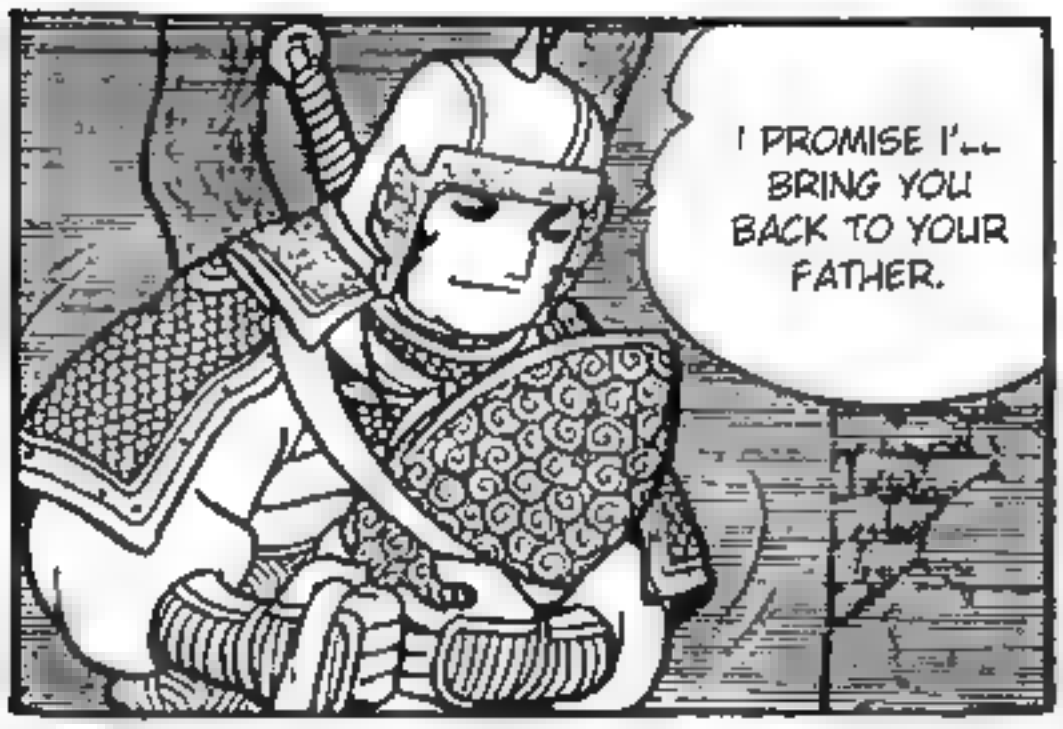
GENERAL, THE FATE OF THAT CHILD NOW LIES IN YOUR HANDS. THOUGH I APPRECIATE YOUR STEADFAST RESOLVE TO SAVE ME AS WELL, ONE MUST NOT DROP THE JEWEL IN ONE'S HANDS TO REACH FOR ANOTHER.

AGHH! M...

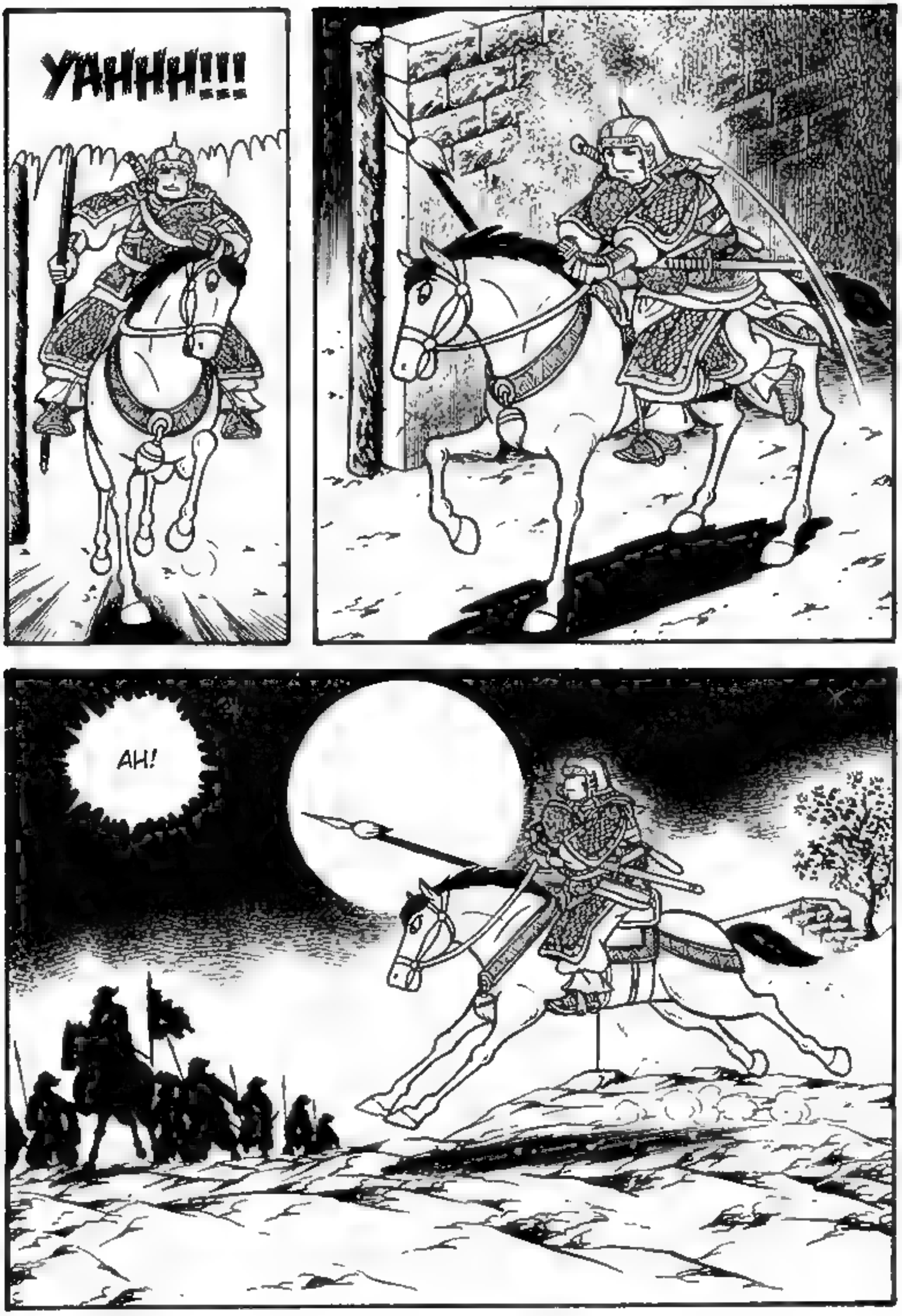
MILADY!

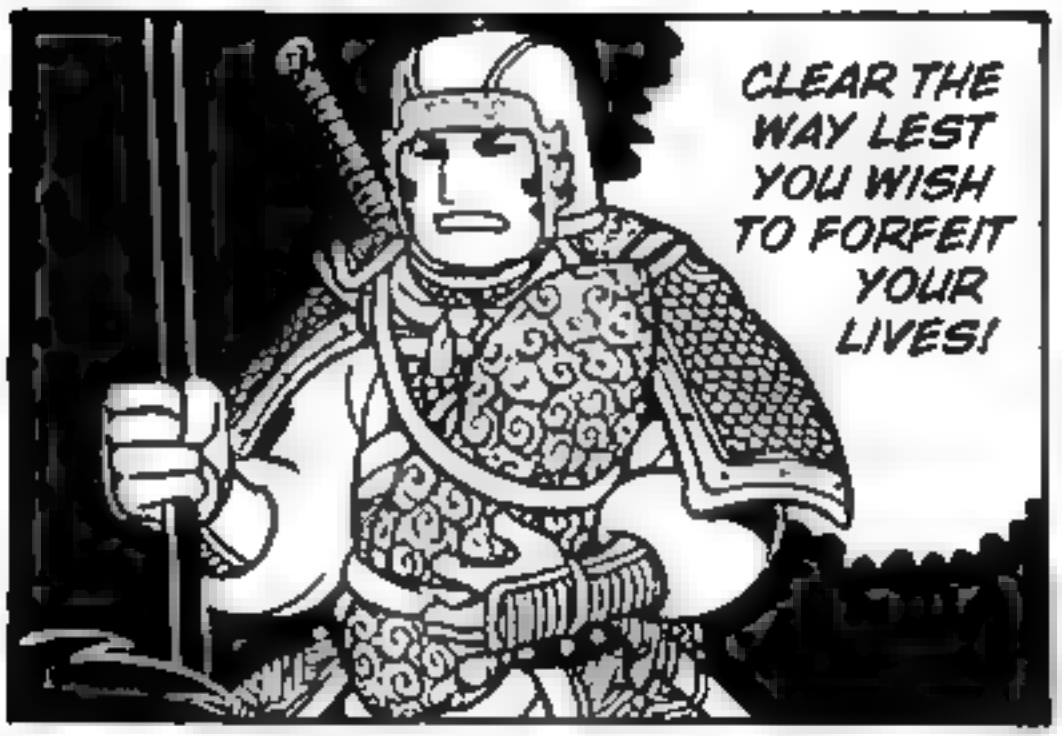
HOW COULD YOU DO SUCH A THING...

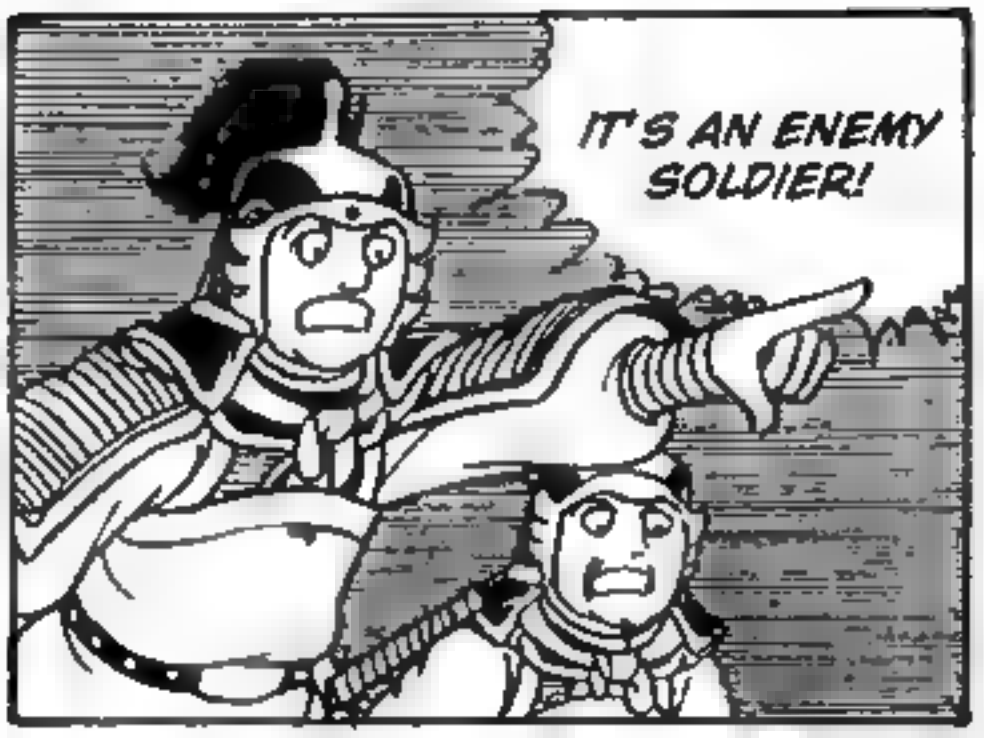

MILADY!

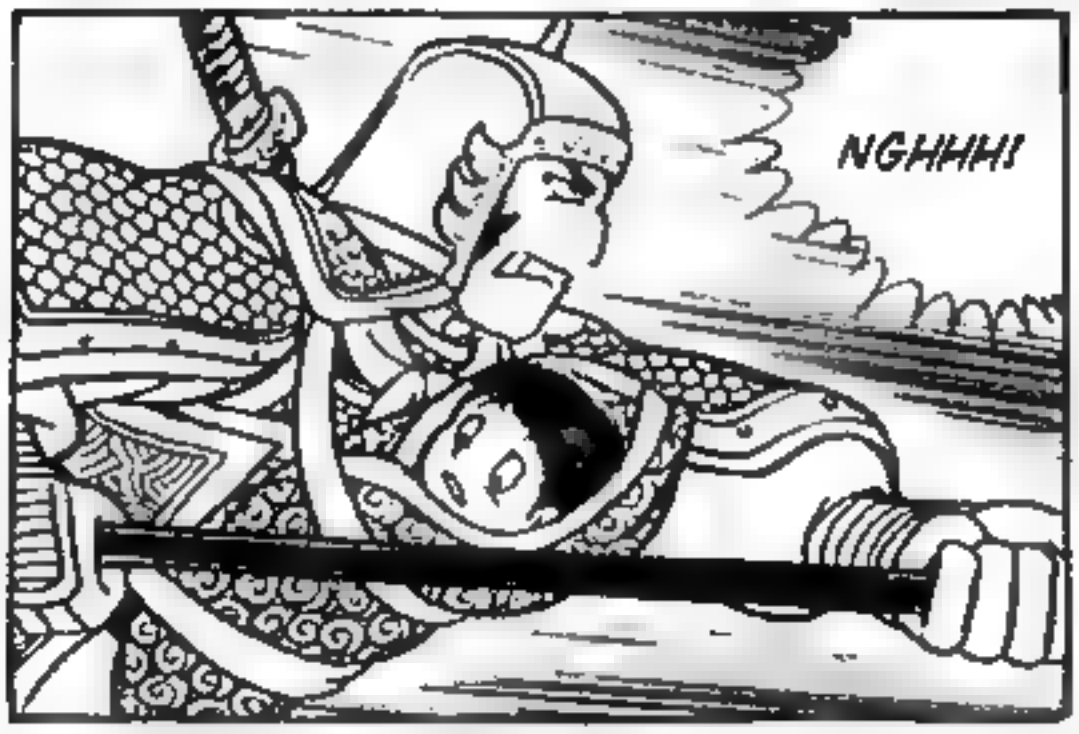

I PROMISE I'... BRING YOU BACK TO YOUR FATHER.

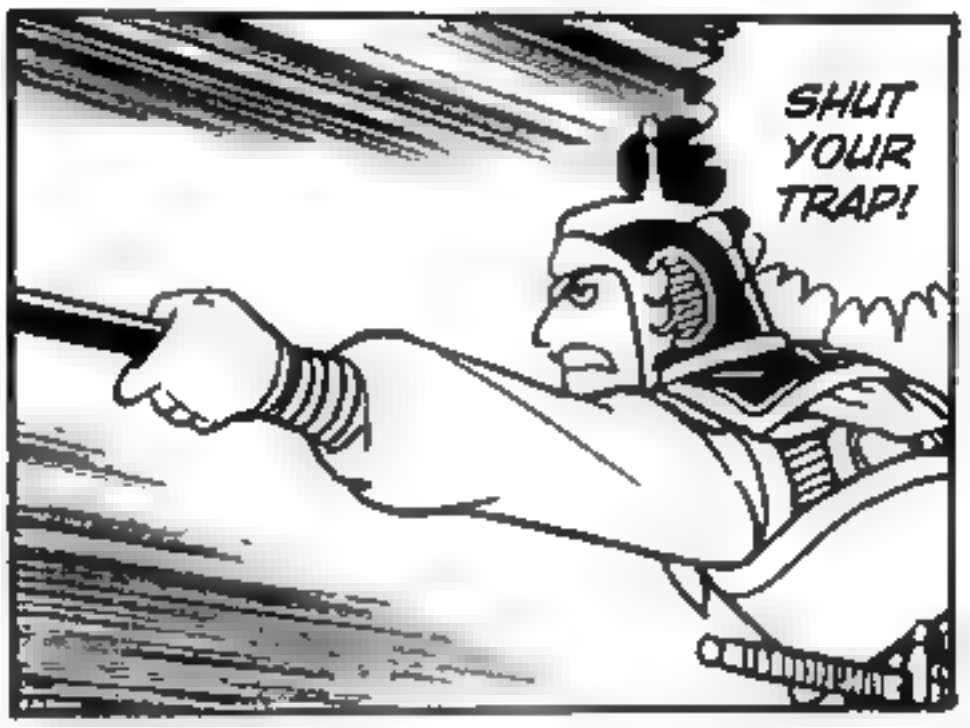
THAT'S RIGHT, THERE'S NO TIME TO WASTE.


YAHHH!!!
AH!


CLEAR THE WAY LEST YOU WISH TO FORFEIT YOUR LIVES!


IT'S AN ENEMY SOLDIER!

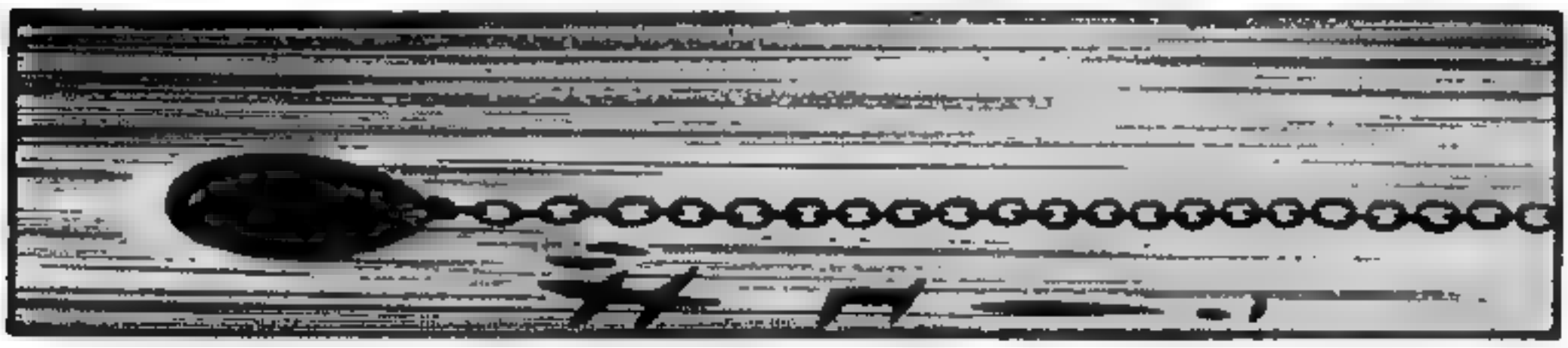

NGHHH!

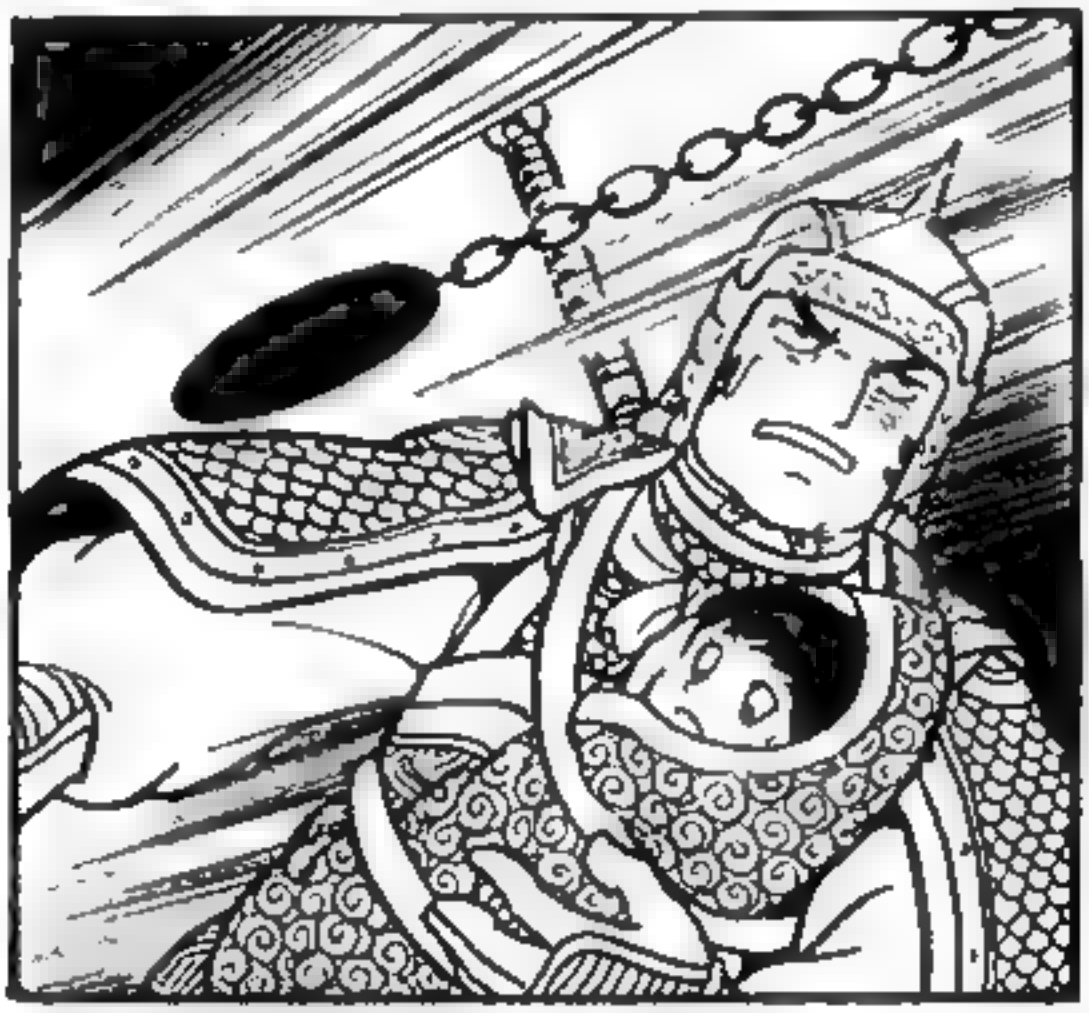

SHUT YOUR TRAP!

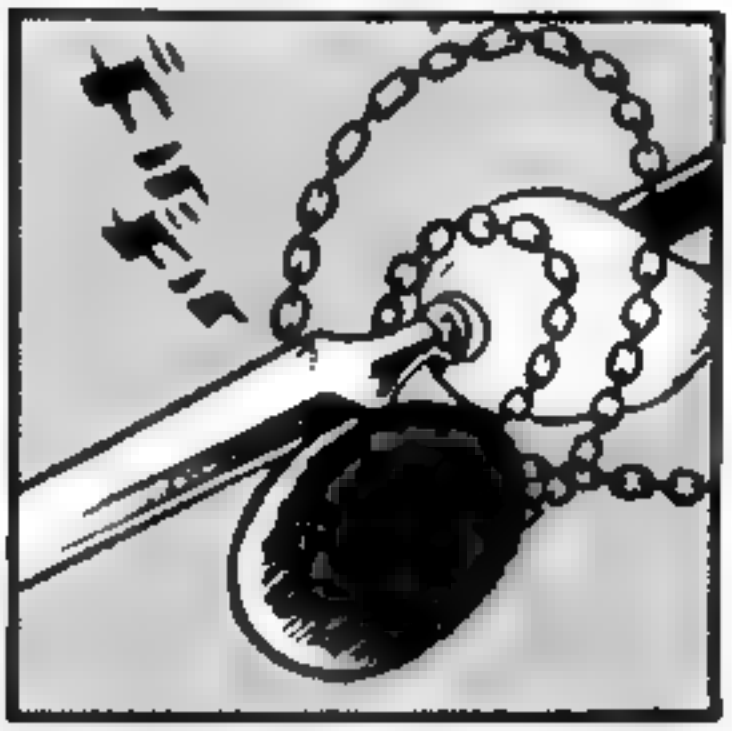
STOP RIGHT THERE! I'LL BE YOUR MATCH FOR TONIGHT!

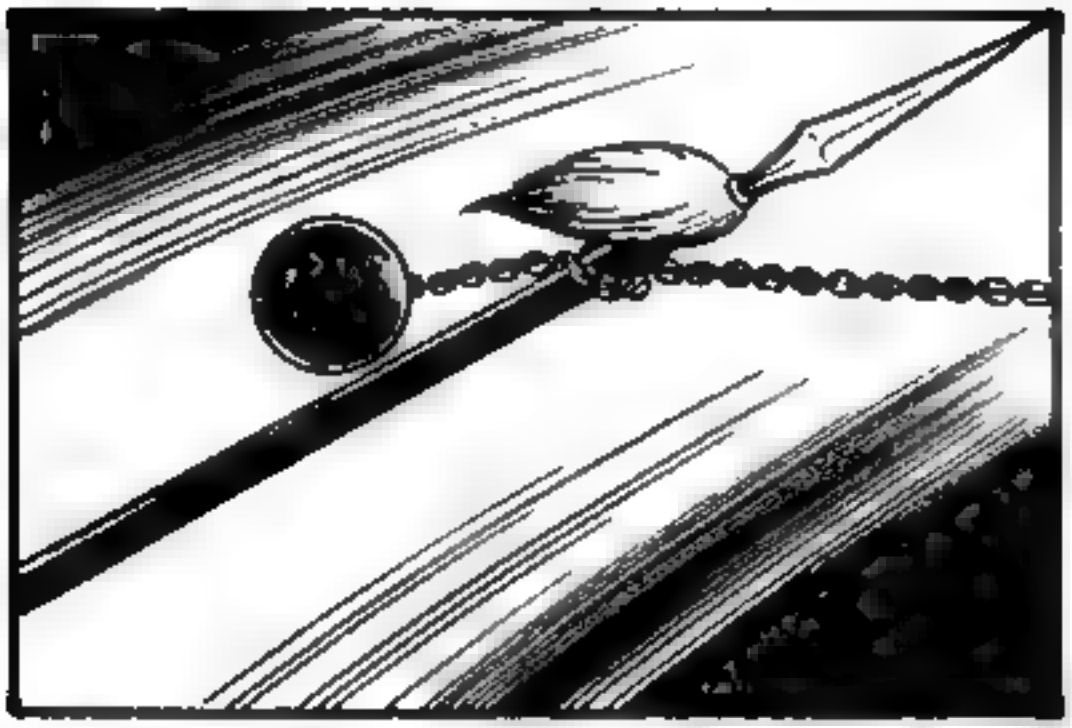
MOVE IT!!!

I WONDER IF YOU CAN DODGE THESE BALLS OF IRON?

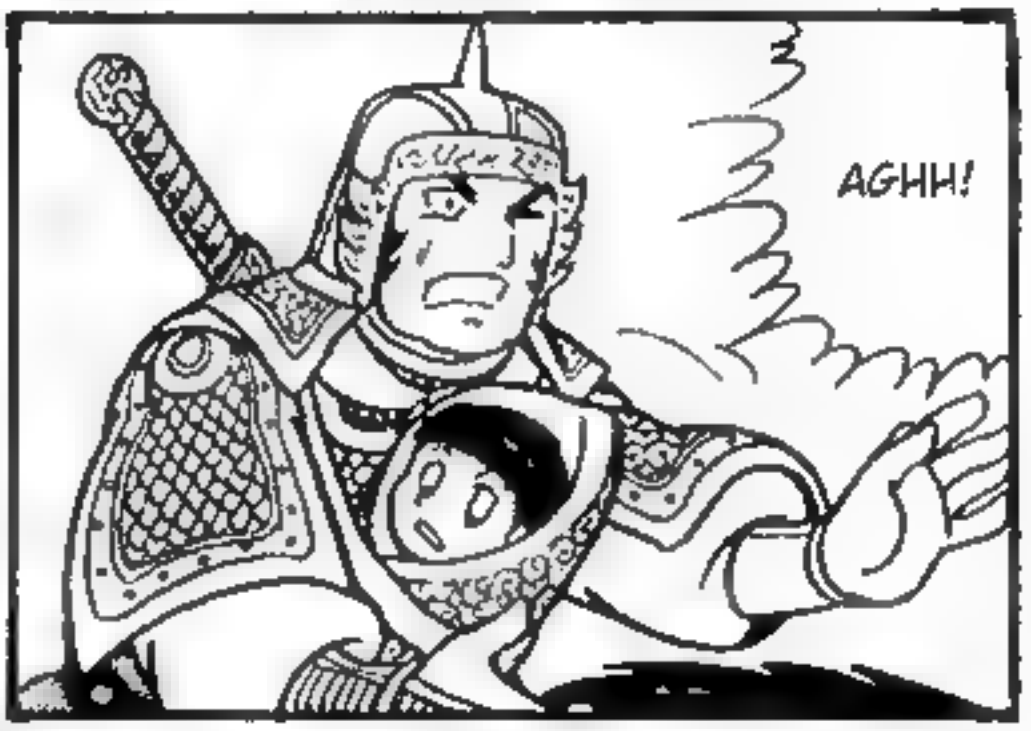




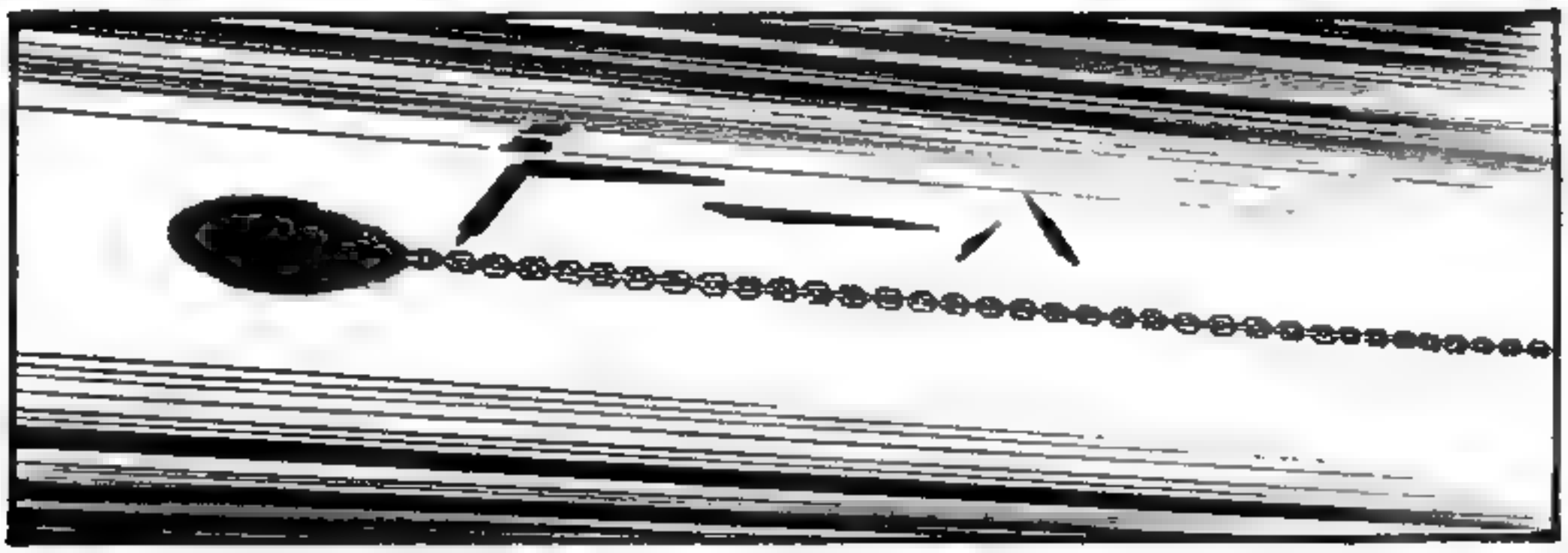




HEH
HEH
HEH

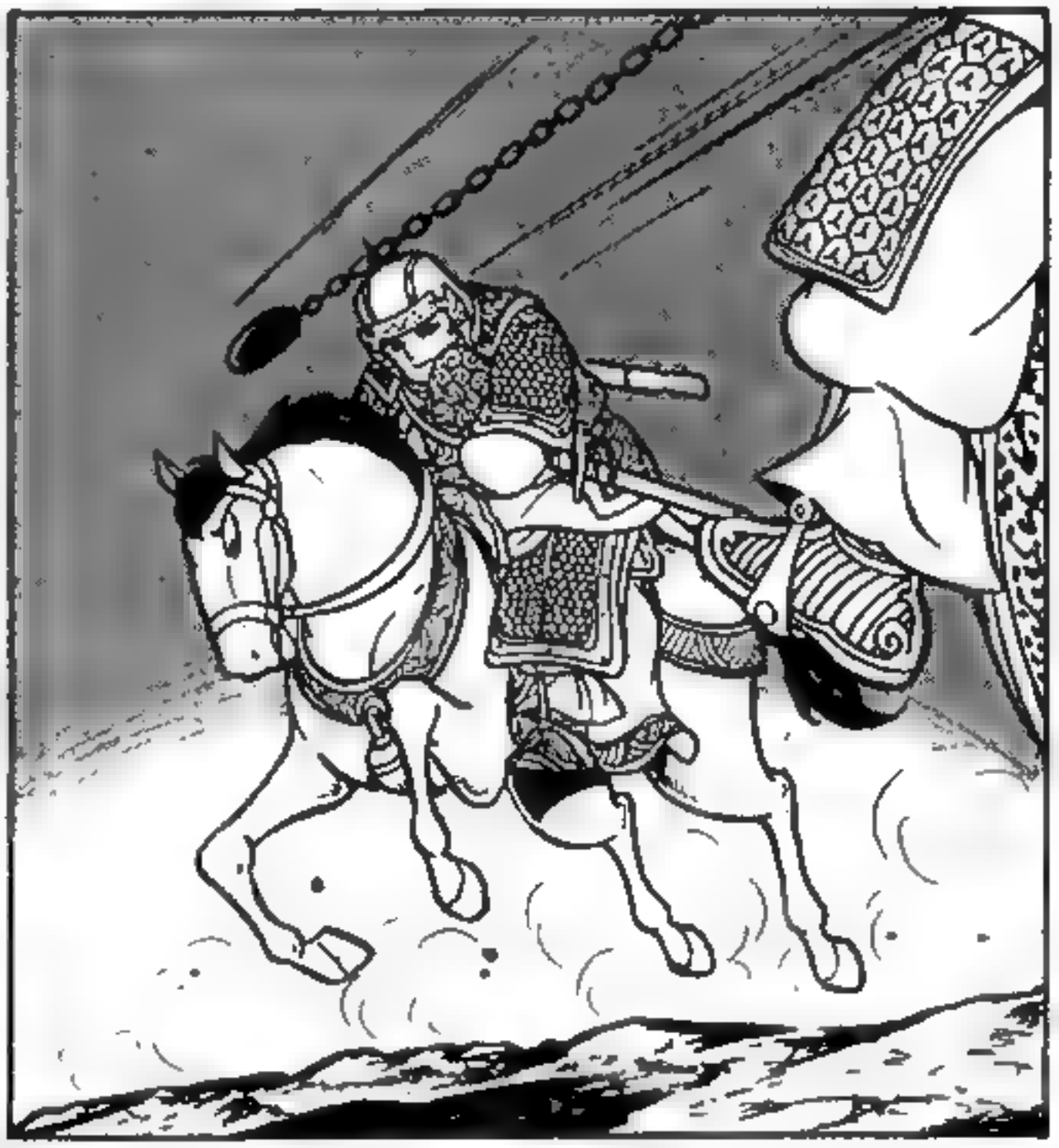

AGHH!

YOU SEEM LIKE A HIGH-RANK ENEMY GENERAL. KILLING YOU WILL BE MOST WORTHWHILE.



AGH!

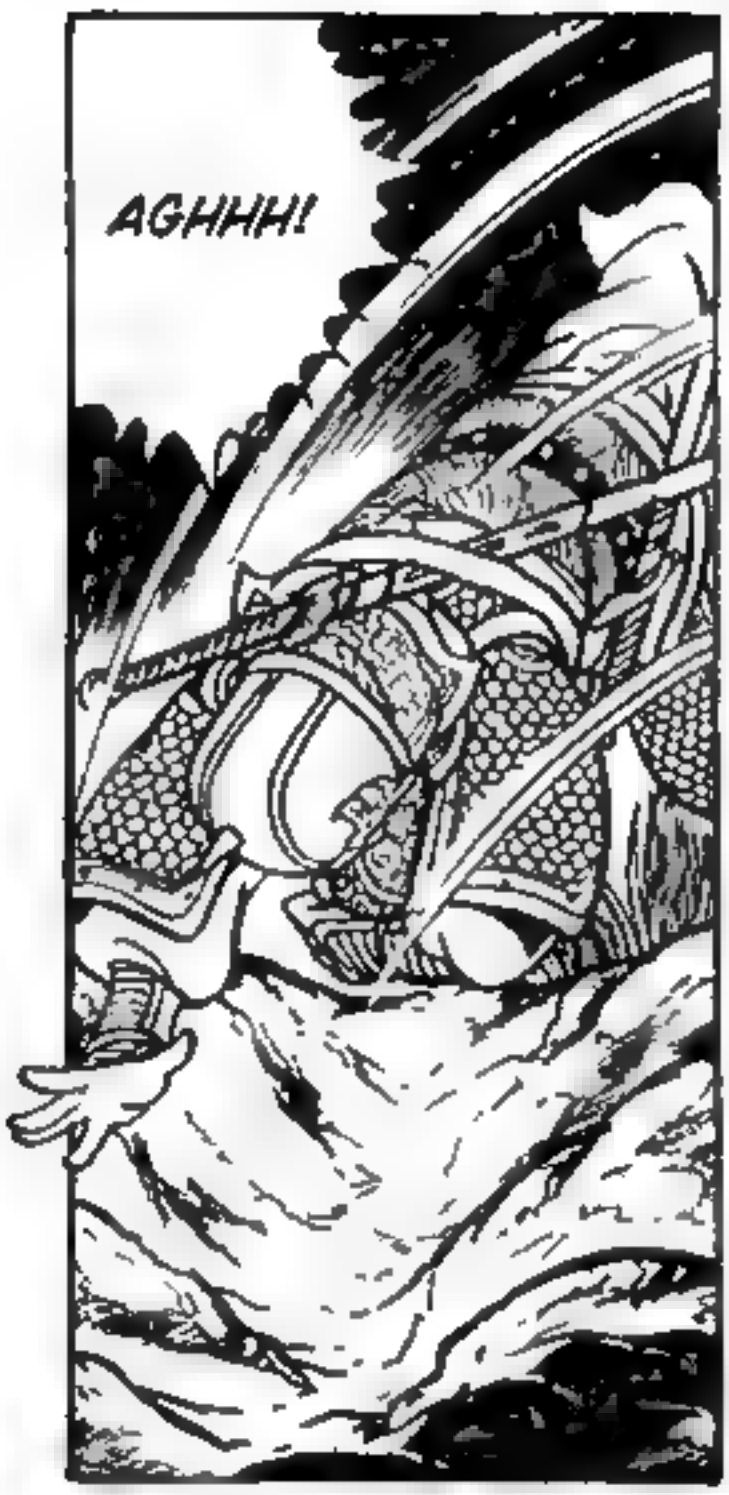
NGHH...



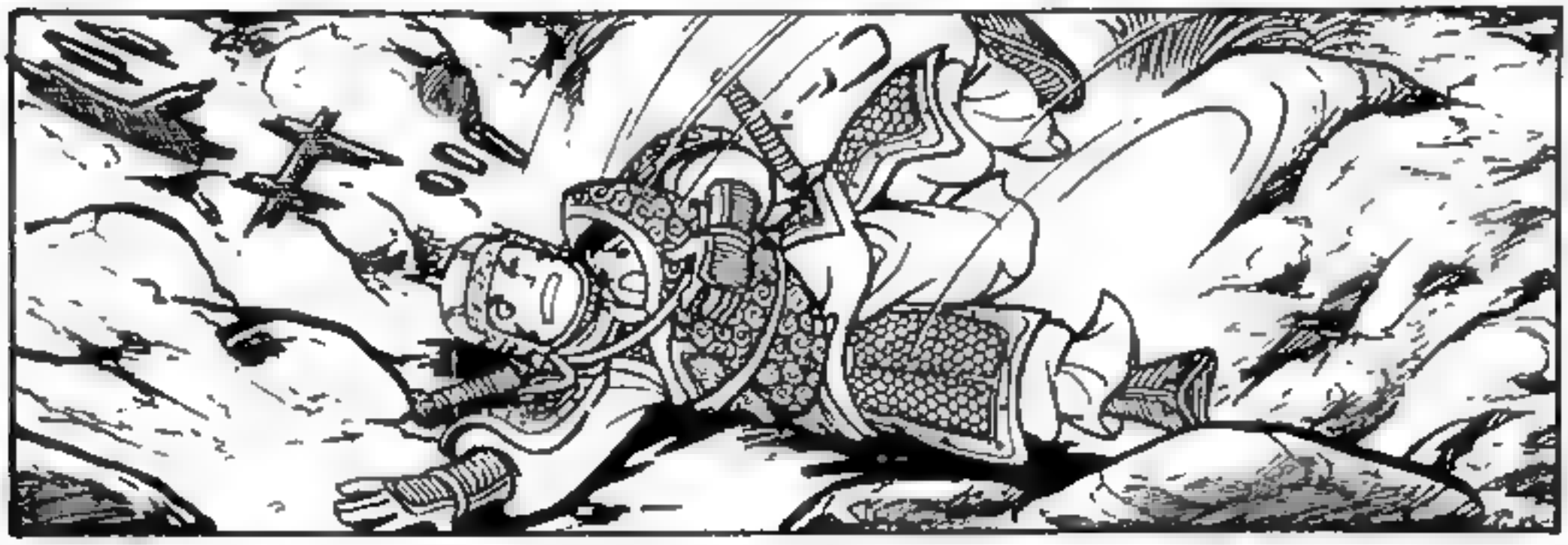
NO, NOW'S NOT THE TIME TO BE FIGHTING. THE CHILD'S SAFETY COMES FIRST.

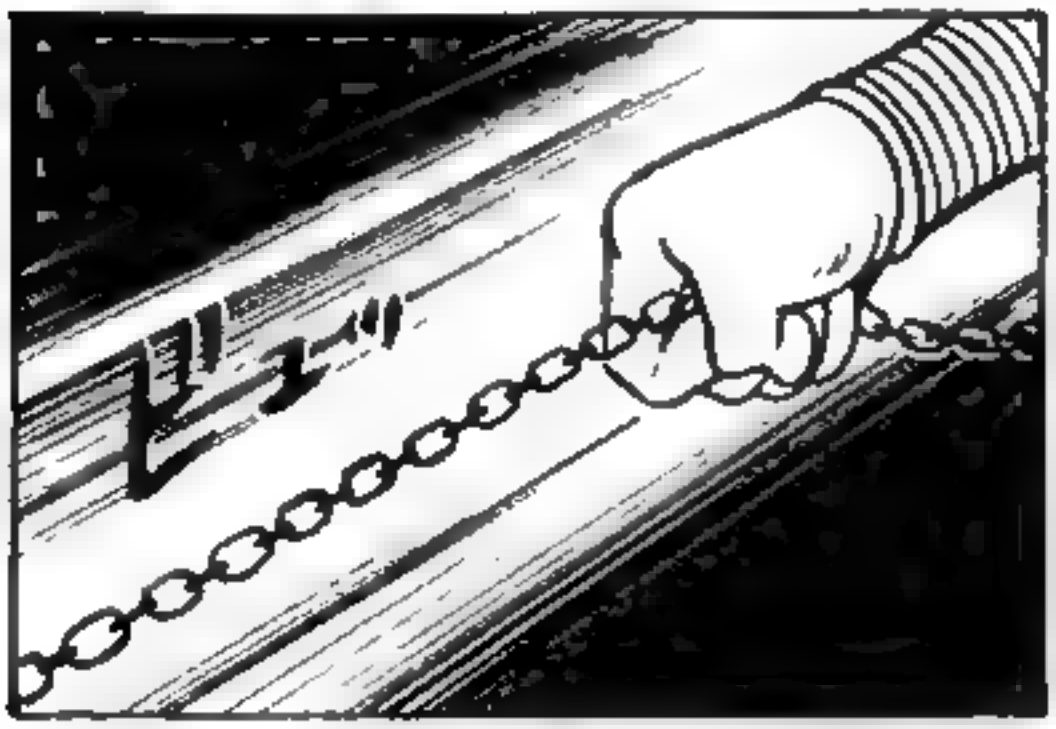
TURNING TAIL, YOU COWARD!?

AS IF I'D LET YOU ESCAPE!

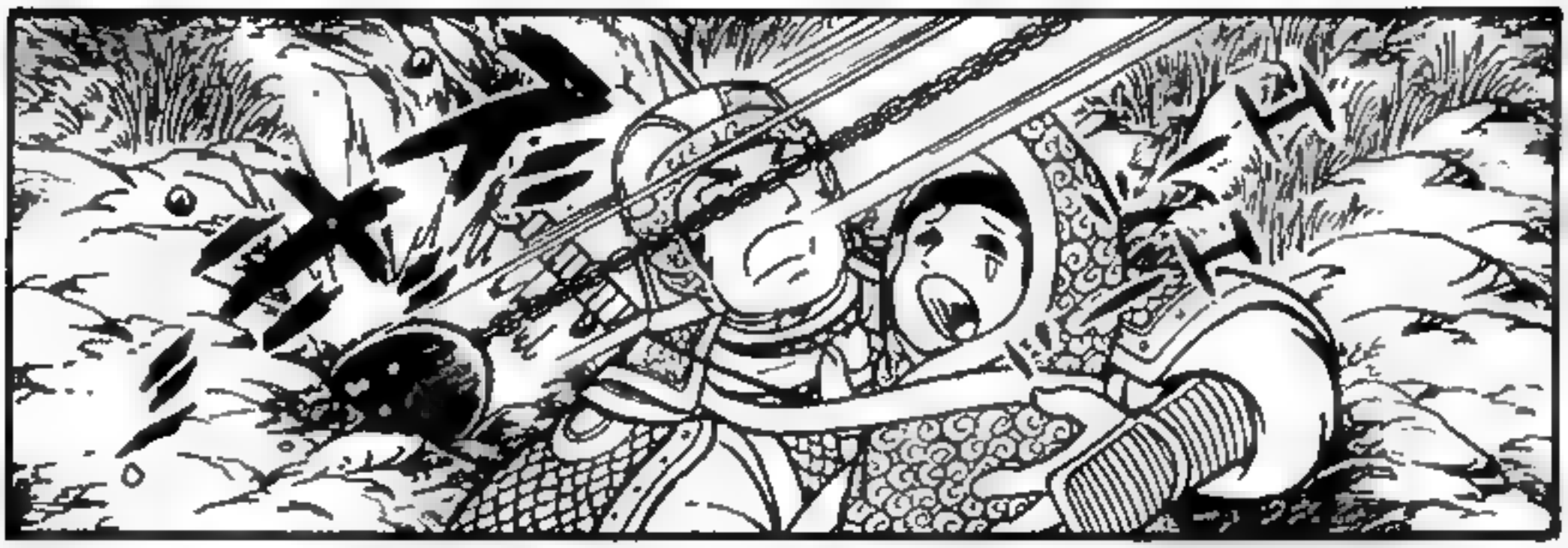

AGHHH!

AH!

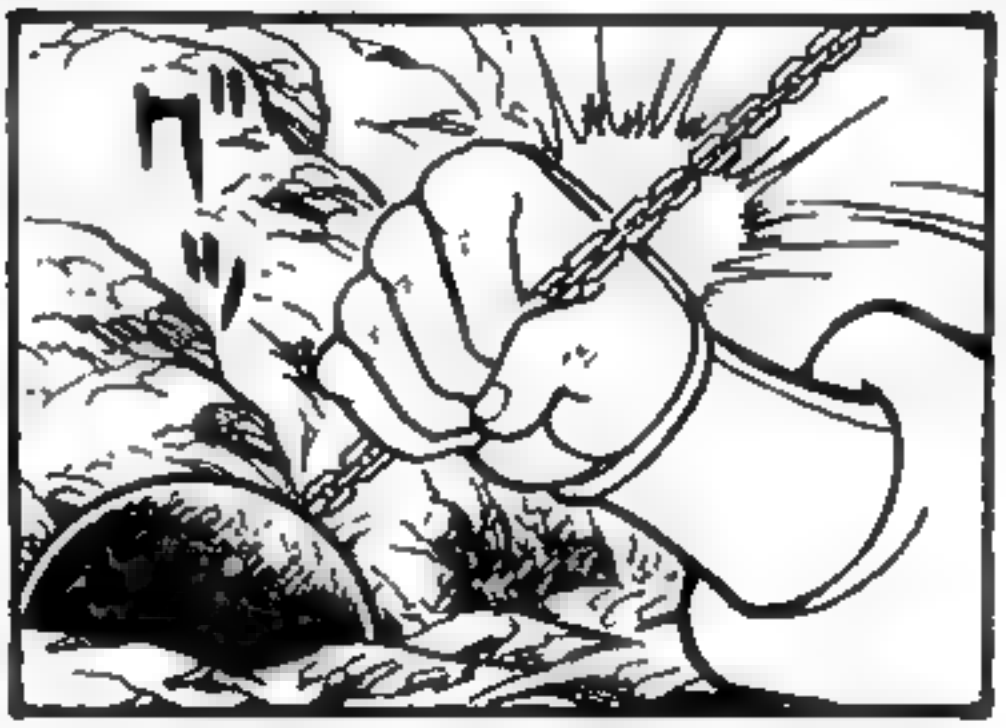


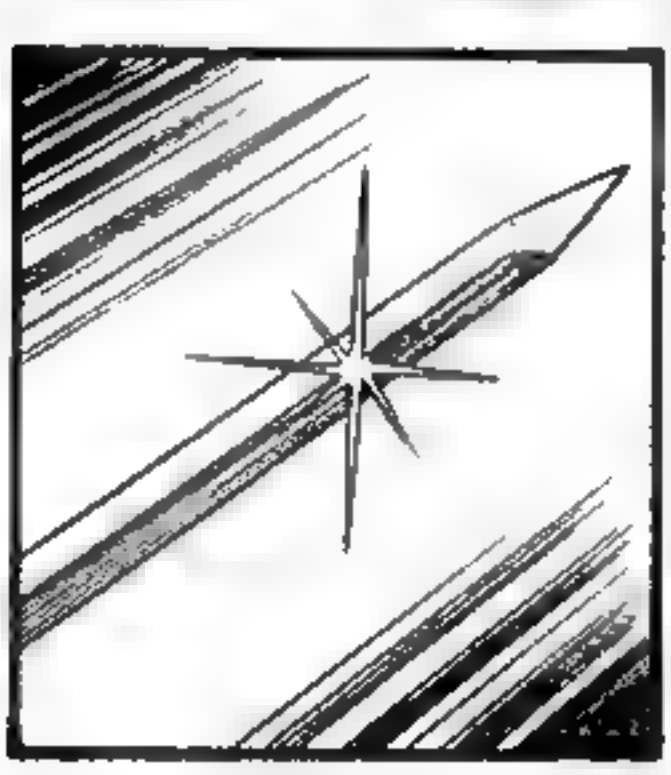


GOT'CHA!



AH!


H!



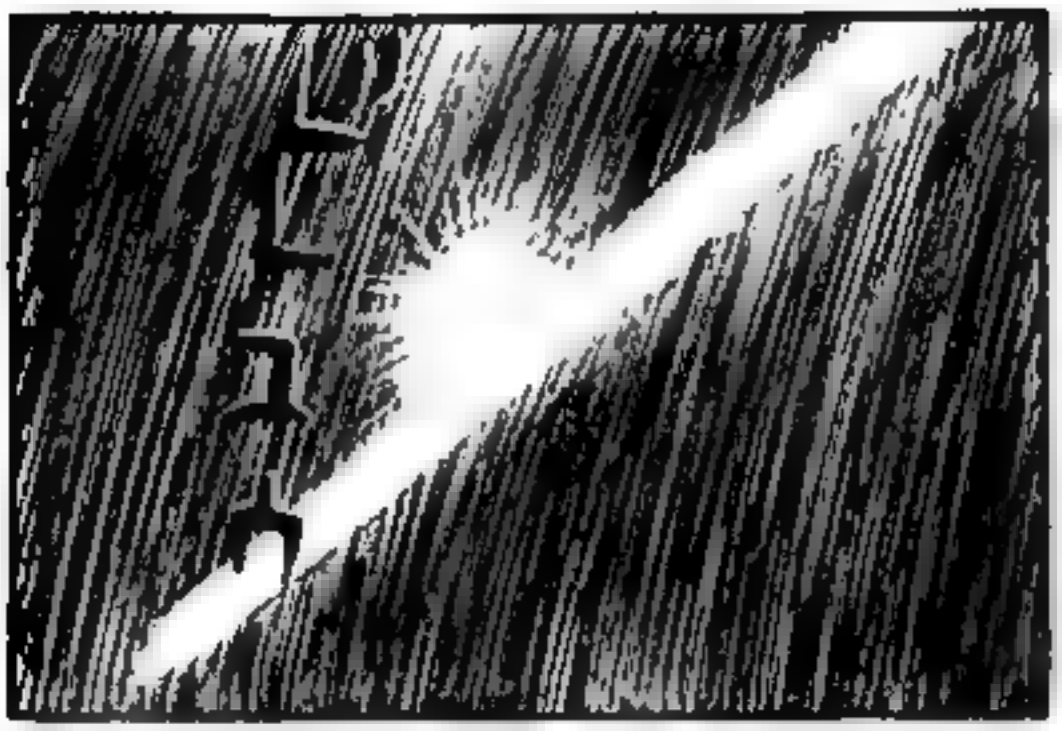
HA HA

IT'S TIME TO BREAK PAST THROUGH THE ENEMY LINES...

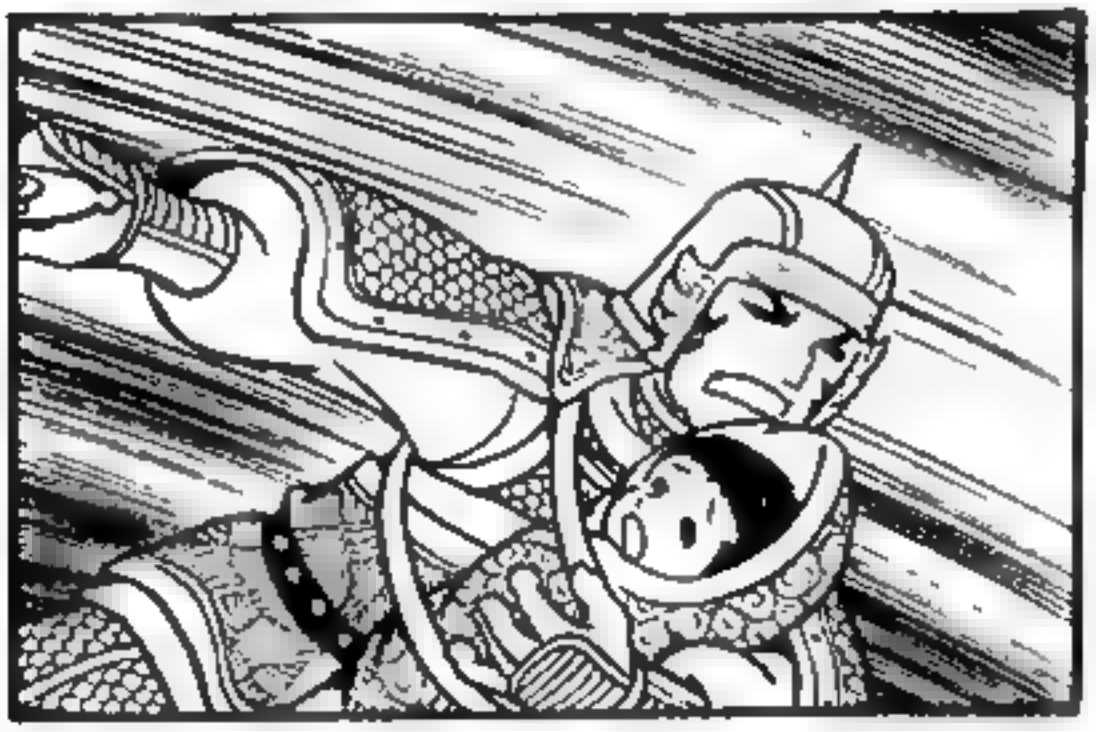
WHAT SHARPNESS!

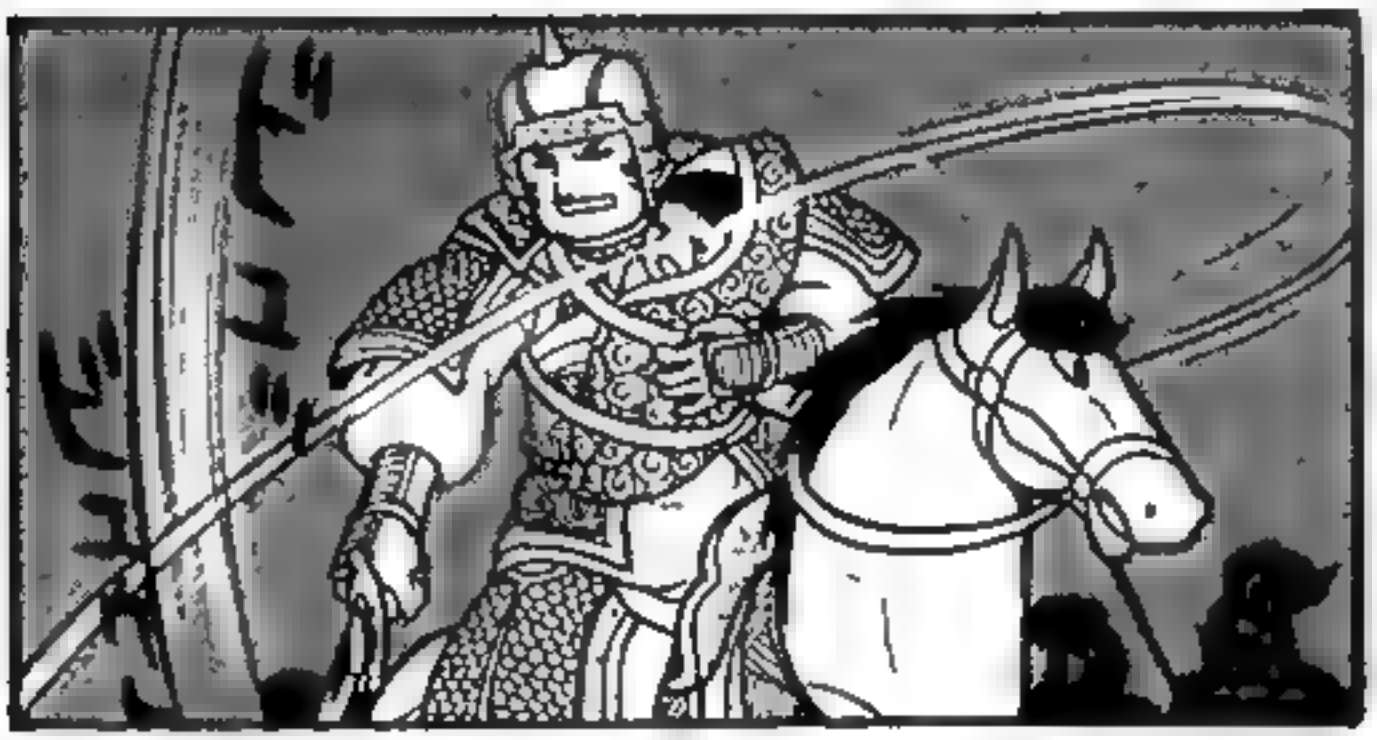
HUSH, HUSH, YOUNG PRINCE. PLEASE ENDURE THIS CHAOS FOR JUST A BIT LONGER.

AN ENEMY?


DASH

CLEAR
THE
WAY!





YES?

CAO HONG!

I DO NOT KNOW, SIR.

WHO IS THAT MAN RUNNING FREELY THROUGH THE FIELD AS IF NOT A SINGLE SOLDIER OF MINE IS PRESENT?

WHO COULD HE BE...?

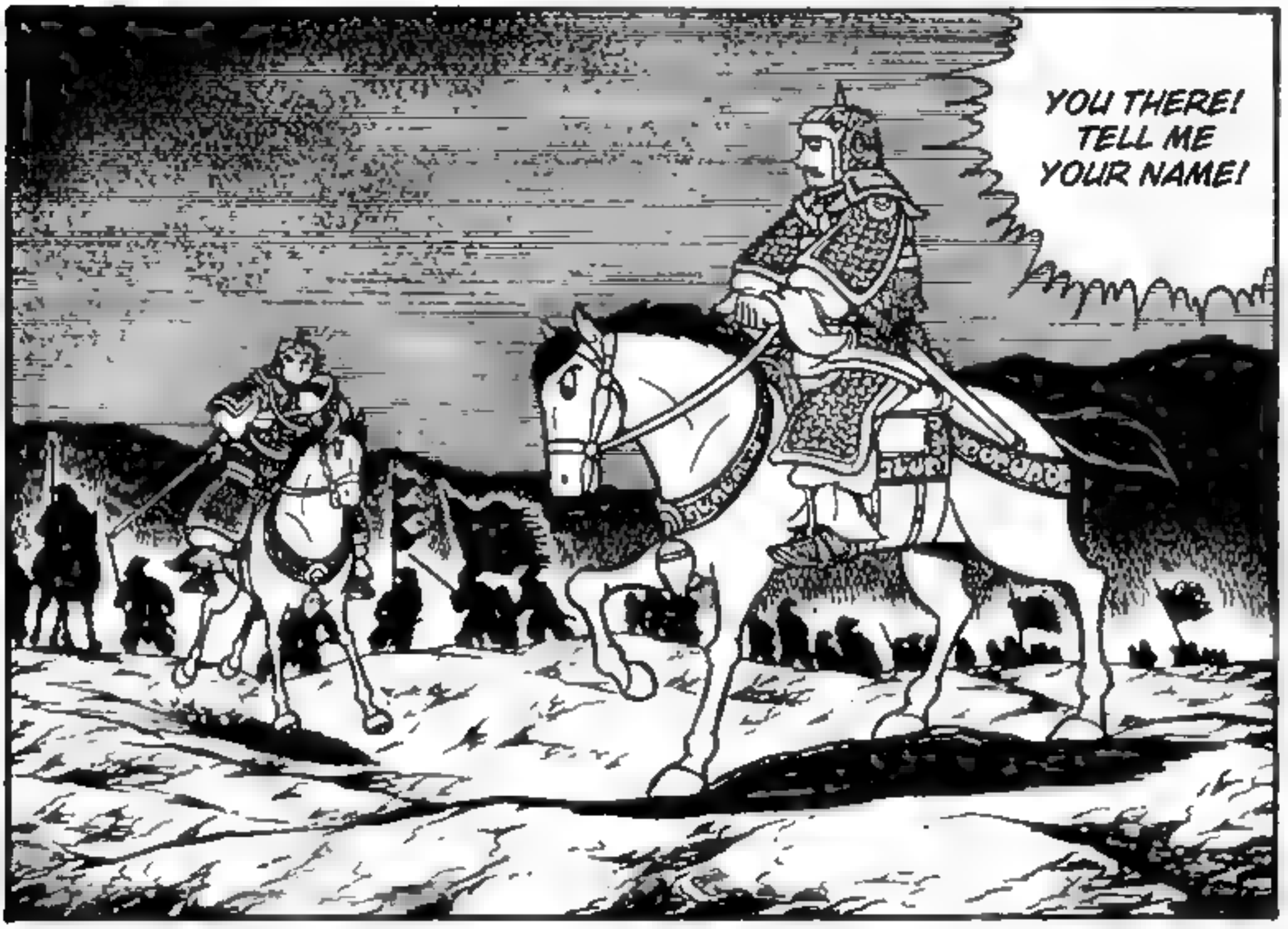
HMM...

IS THERE ANY AMONG YOU WHO KNOWS THE NAME OF THAT MAN?

YES, SIR.

CAO HONG. I WANT YOU TO GO AND FIND OUT WHO THAT MAN IS.

HOW VEXING...


YOU THERE! TELL ME YOUR NAME!

ZHAO YUN ZILONG!?

I AM ZHAO YUN, STYLED NAME ZILONG. IF YOU DARE STAND IN MY WAY, I SHAN'T HESITATE TO CUT YOU DOWN!

?

TELL ME THEN.

CHANCELLOR! I FIND OUT WHO HE IS!

SO HE'S THE ONE CALLED ZHAO ZILONG?

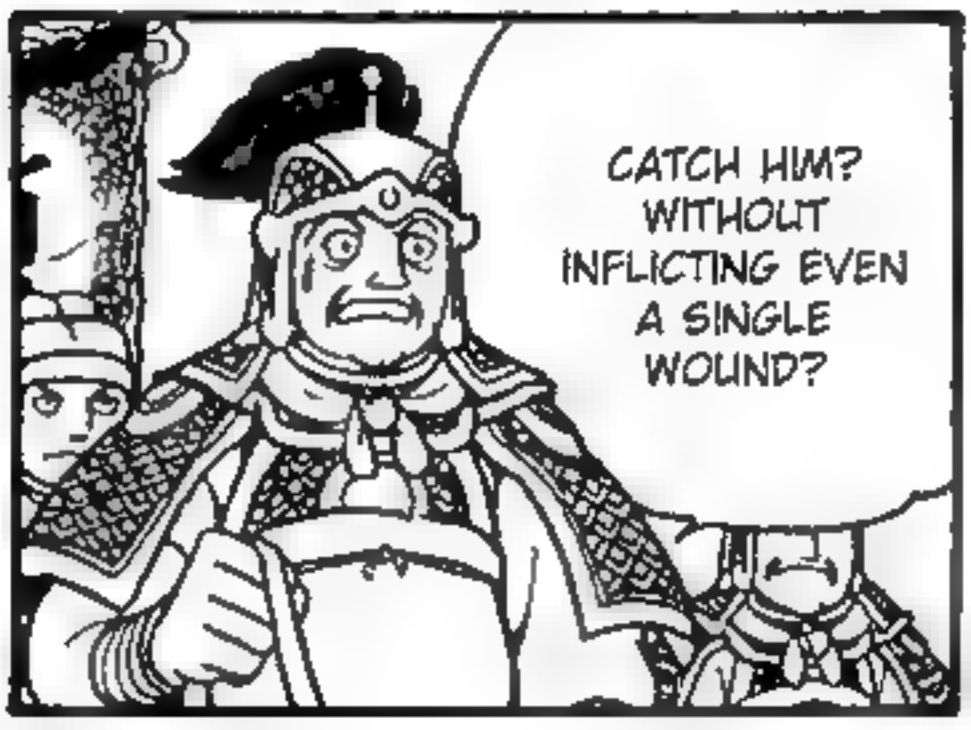
HE IS LIU BEI'S FAMED GENERAL, ZHAO ZILONG.

I WISH TO MAKE THAT MAN MY SUBORDI-NATE.

A VERY TIGER OF A MAN! TRULY, HE IS A WARRIOR AMONG WARRIORS.

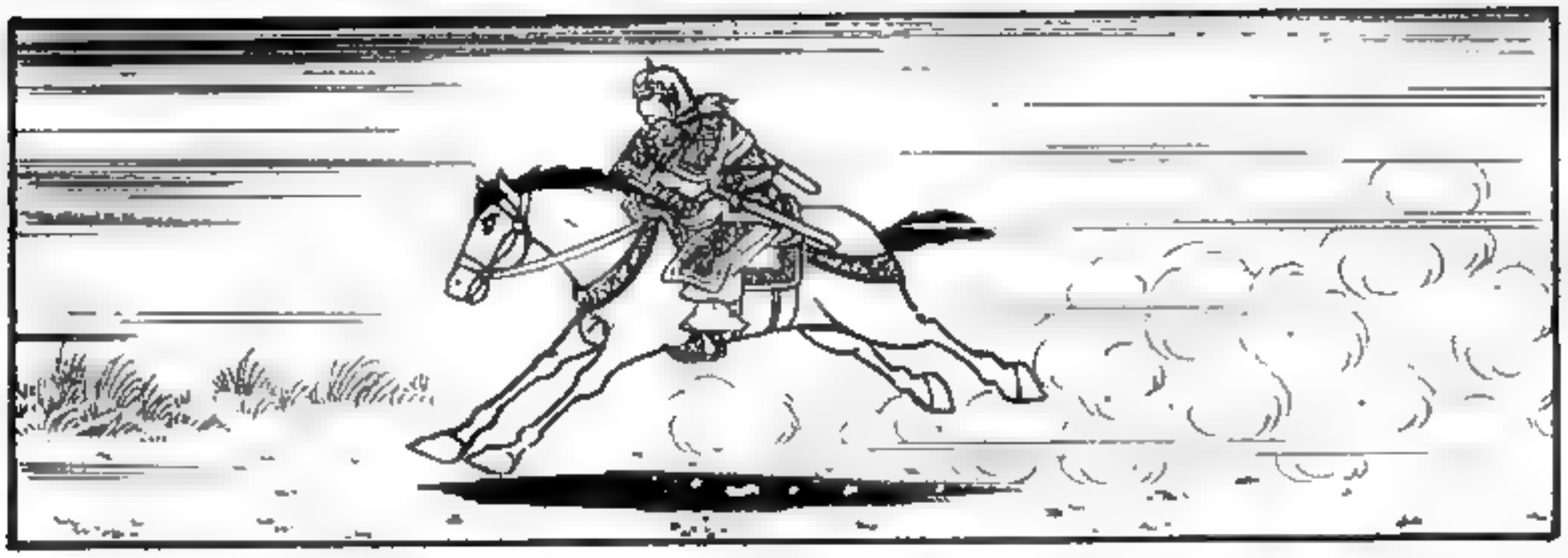
I ORDER YOU TO CATCH THAT MAN ALIVE!

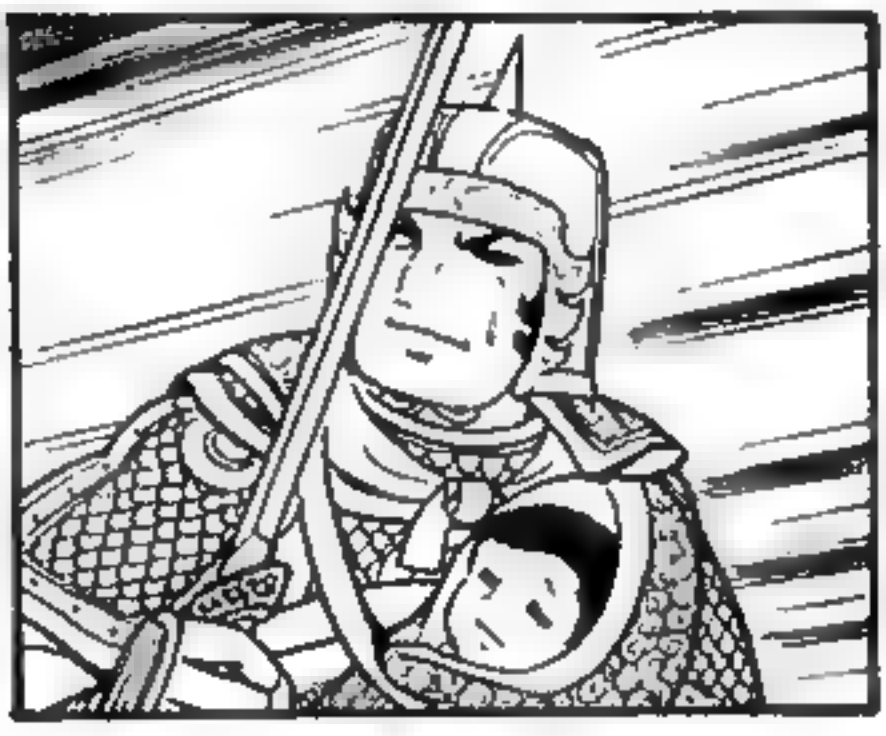
THAT'S RIGHT. I FORBID THE USE OF ARROWS.


CATCH HIM? WITHOUT INFLICTING EVEN A SINGLE WOUND?

NOW GO!

STRONG AS HE MAY BE, HE'S STILL ONLY ONE MAN. USE OUR FORMATION TO DRIVE HIM INTO A CORNER AS IF HUNTING GAME.





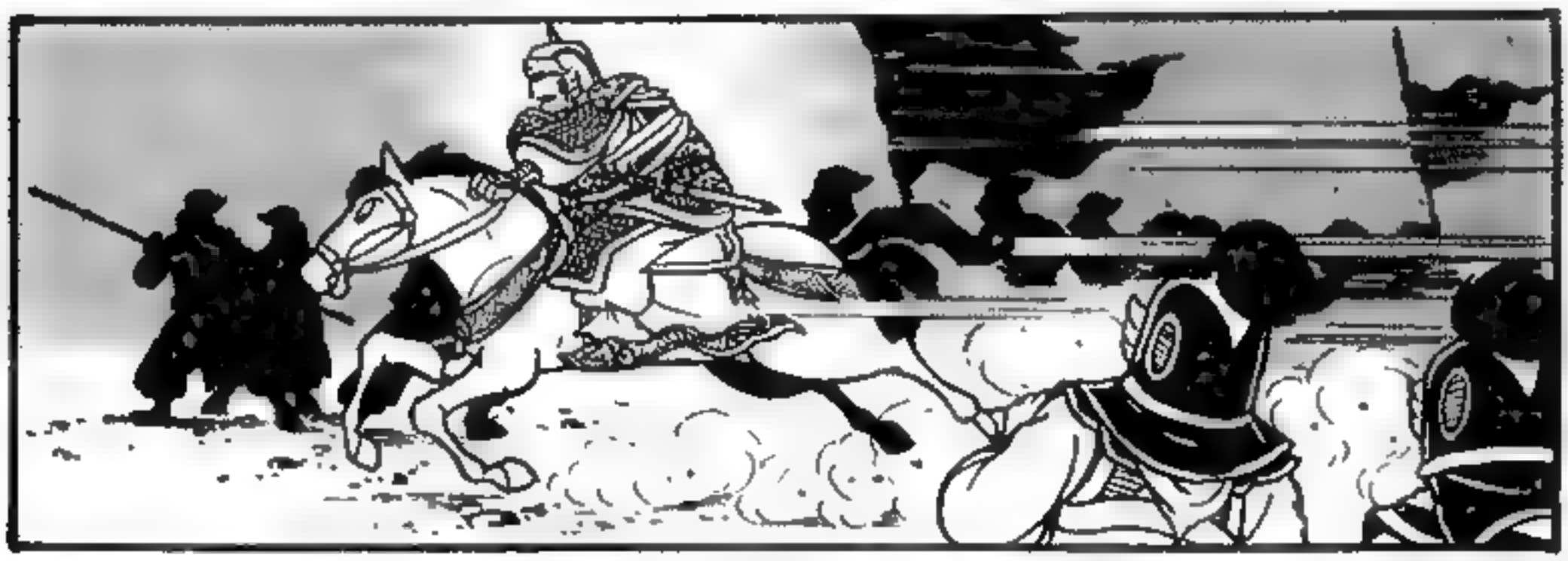
CLEAR THE WAY
OR I SHALL
SEND YOU ALL
TO HELL!

SILENCE!

GIVE IT UP, YOU'RE SURROUNDED!

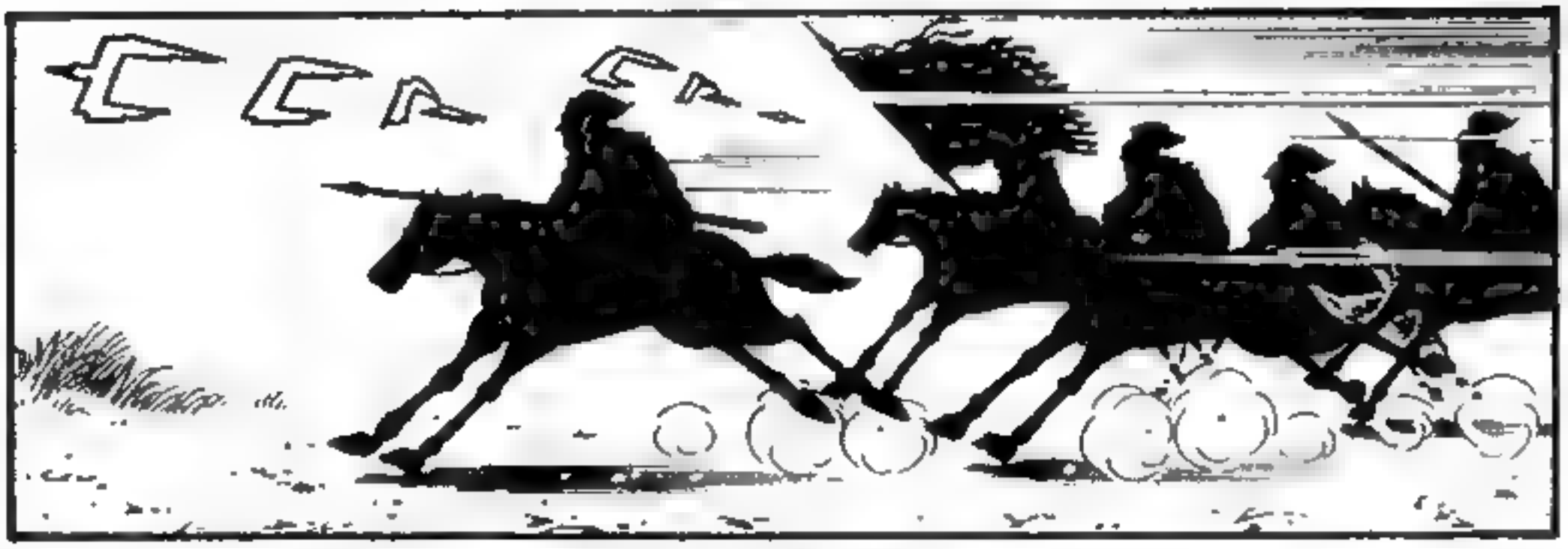
JEEZ, THE CHANCELLOR CAN SURE MAKE SOME UNREASONABLE ORDERS SOMETIMES... IF ONLY WE COULD USE ARROWS, WE COULD BRING HIM DOWN IN AN INSTANT...

IT'S IMPOS-
SIBLE TO
GET CLOSE
TO HIM LIKE
TH'S!

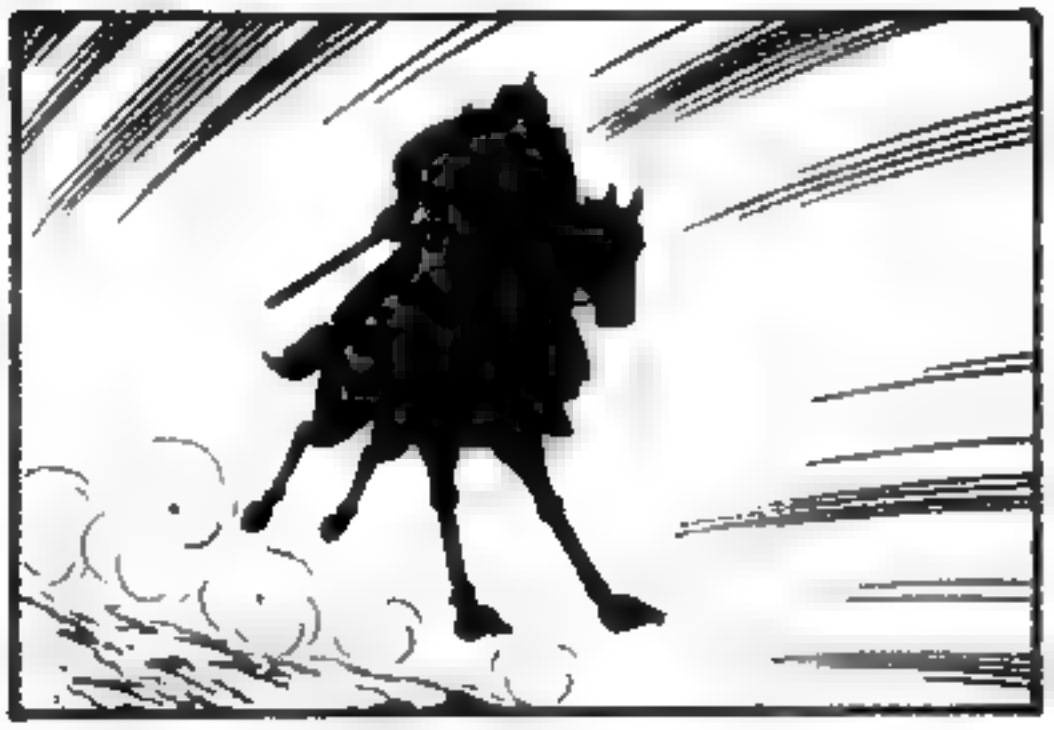


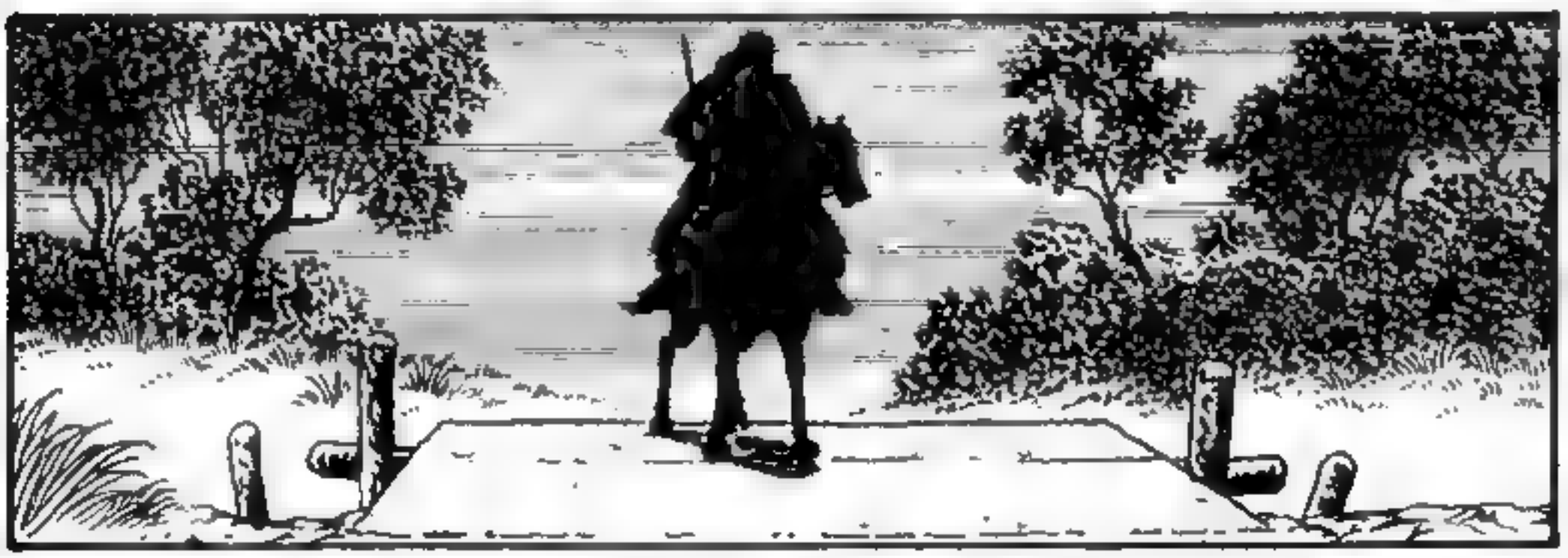
AFTER
HIM!

CURSES!
HE'S BROKEN
PAST OUR
FORMATION!



HM?





ZHANG FEI!

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU, ZHAO ZILONG. I HEARD YOU'VE GONE OVER TO CAO CAO'S SIDE, IS THAT TRUE?

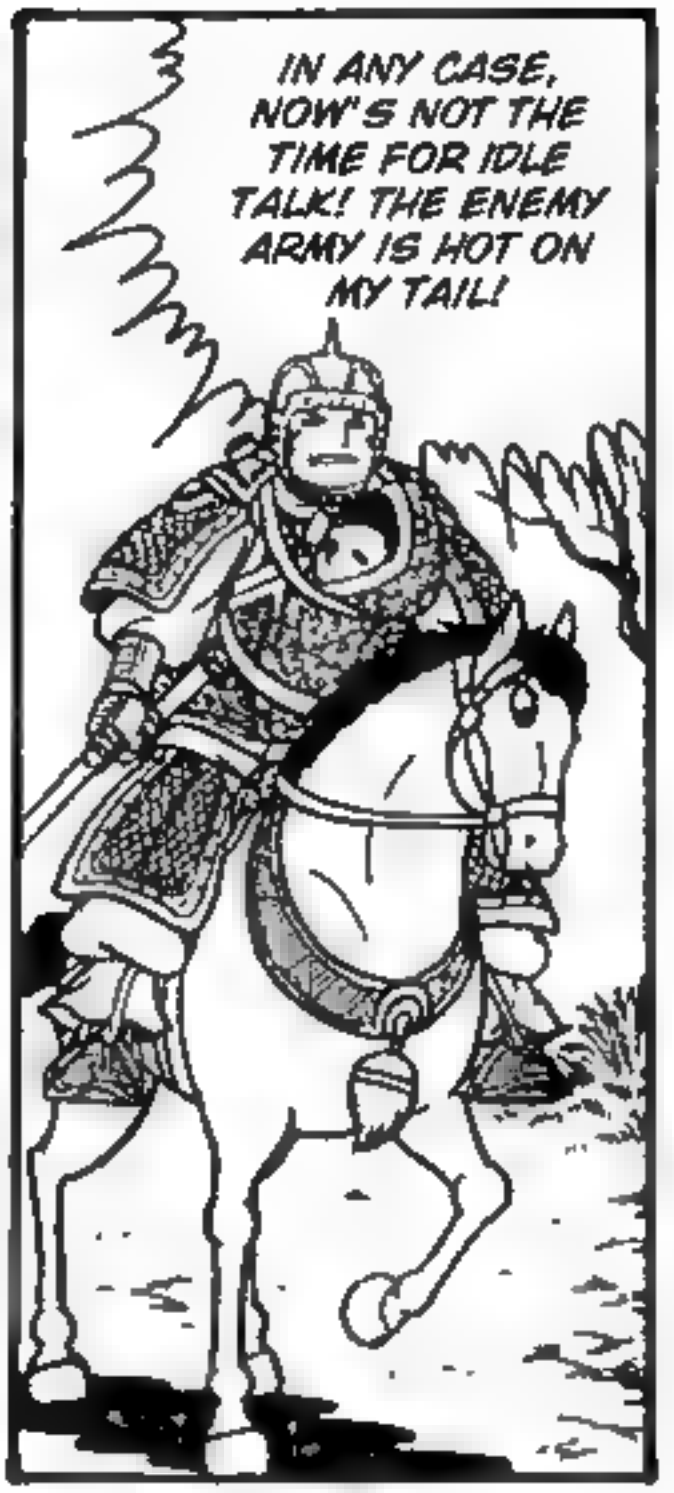
OUR LORD'S CHILD!?

WHAT NONSENSE IS THIS!? YOU THINK I WOULD HAVE BRAVED PAST CAO CAO'S SOLDIERS WITH OUR LORD'S CHILD IN MY HANDS IF I WENT OVER TO HIS SIDE!?

LOOK RIGHT HERE.

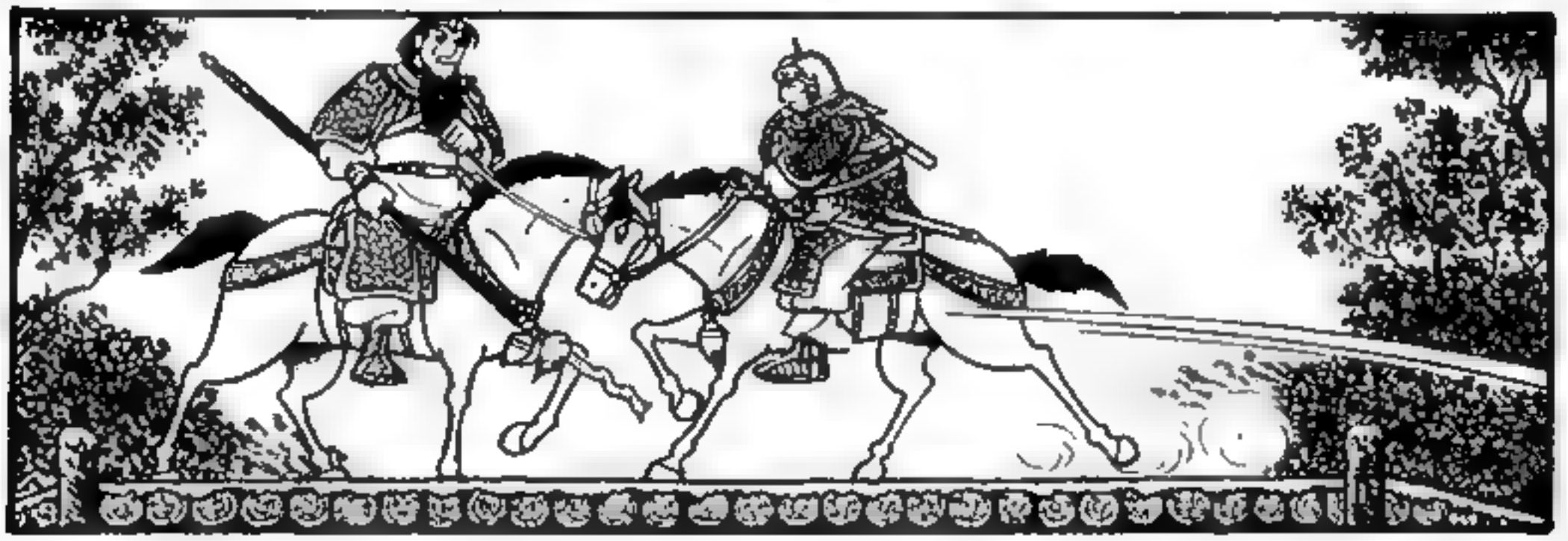
O-OF COURSE! I KNEW SOMETHING WAS STRANGE WHEN THEY SAID YOU BETRAYED US... HAHA, AS IF THAT'D EVER HAPPEN!

AHHH!


IN ANY CASE, NOW'S NOT THE TIME FOR IDLE TALK! THE ENEMY ARMY IS HOT ON MY TAIL!

DON'T WORRY, I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE. YOU GO ON AHEAD.

LOOK! THEY'RE ALREADY HERE.

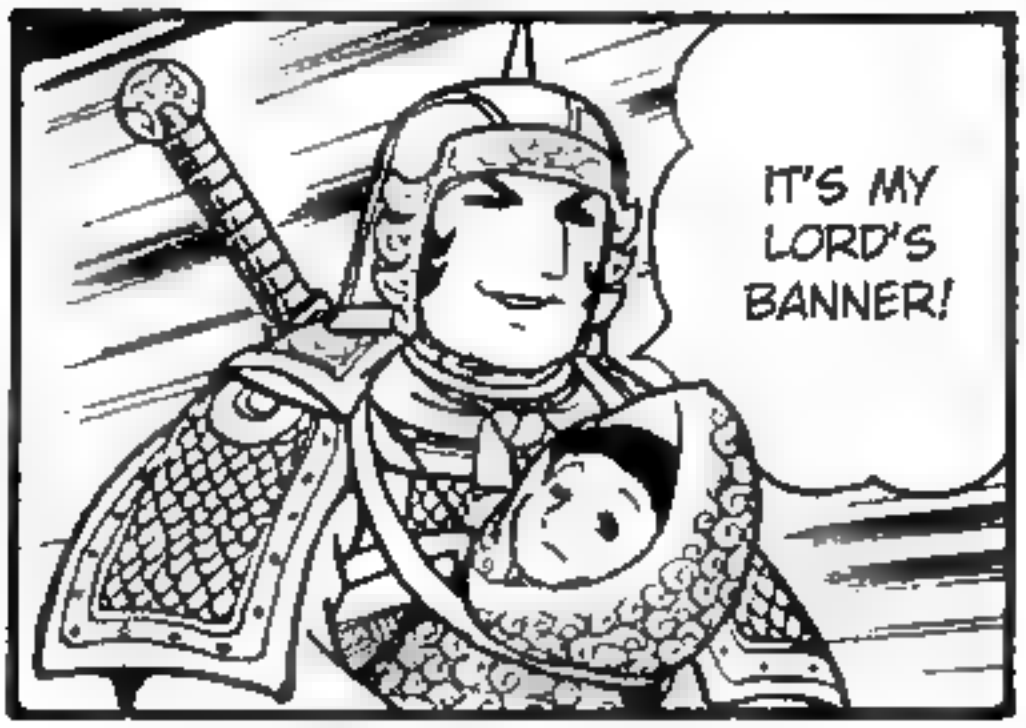


DON'T GO UNDERESTIMATING ME NOW. AFTER ALL, EVEN YOU'VE MANAGED TO BREAK PAST THROUGH CAO CAO'S ARMY ALONE.

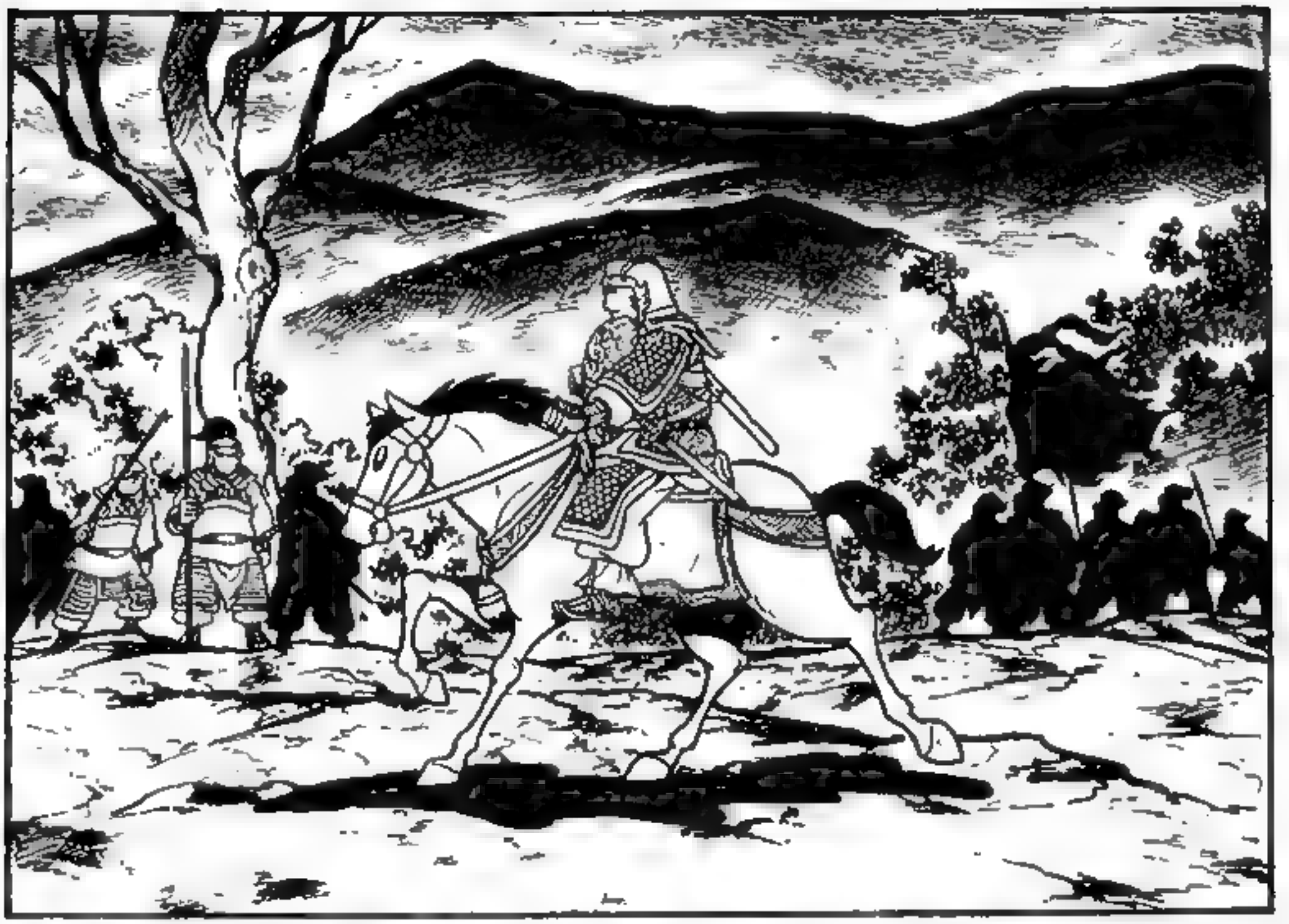
ARE YOU SURE YOU'LL BE FINE ALONE?

ALRIGHT THEN.

NOT ONLY THAT, THIS IS A NARROW BRIDGE SO THE ENEMIES CAN'T ATTACK IN MASS. JUST LEAVE IT TO ME.


IT'S MY LORD'S BANNER!

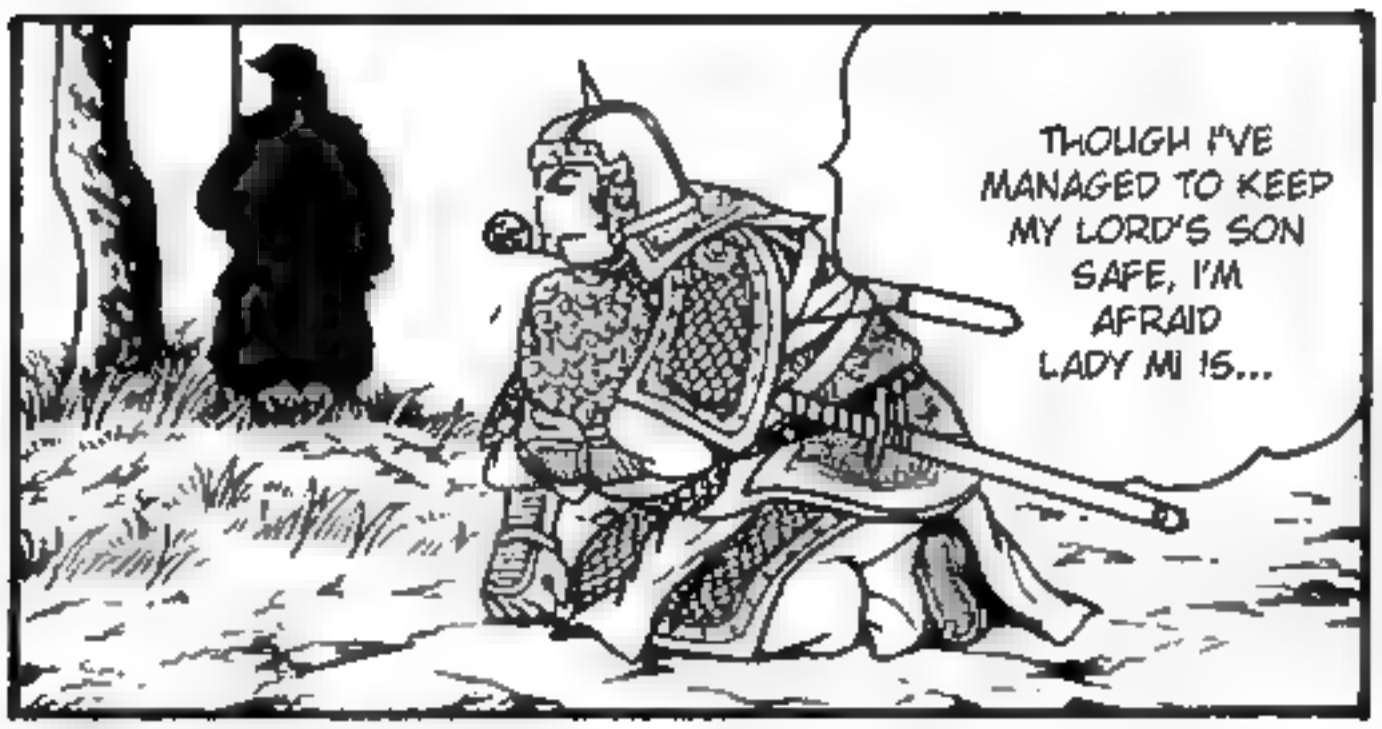
劉



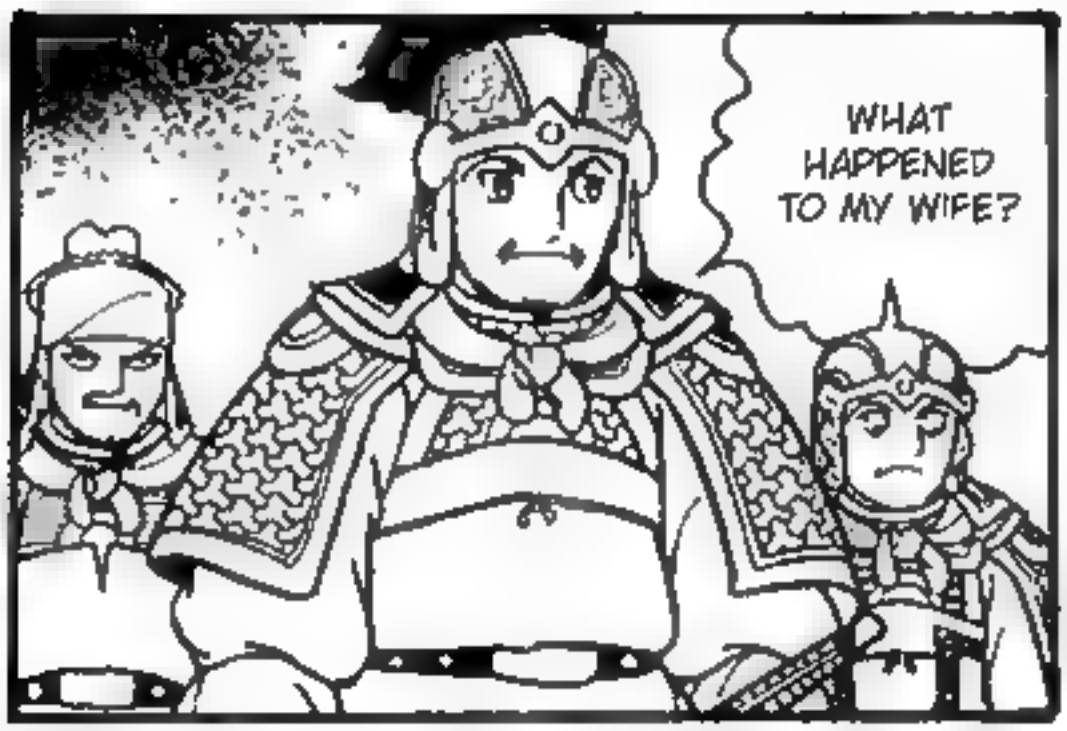
ZHAO ZILONG!

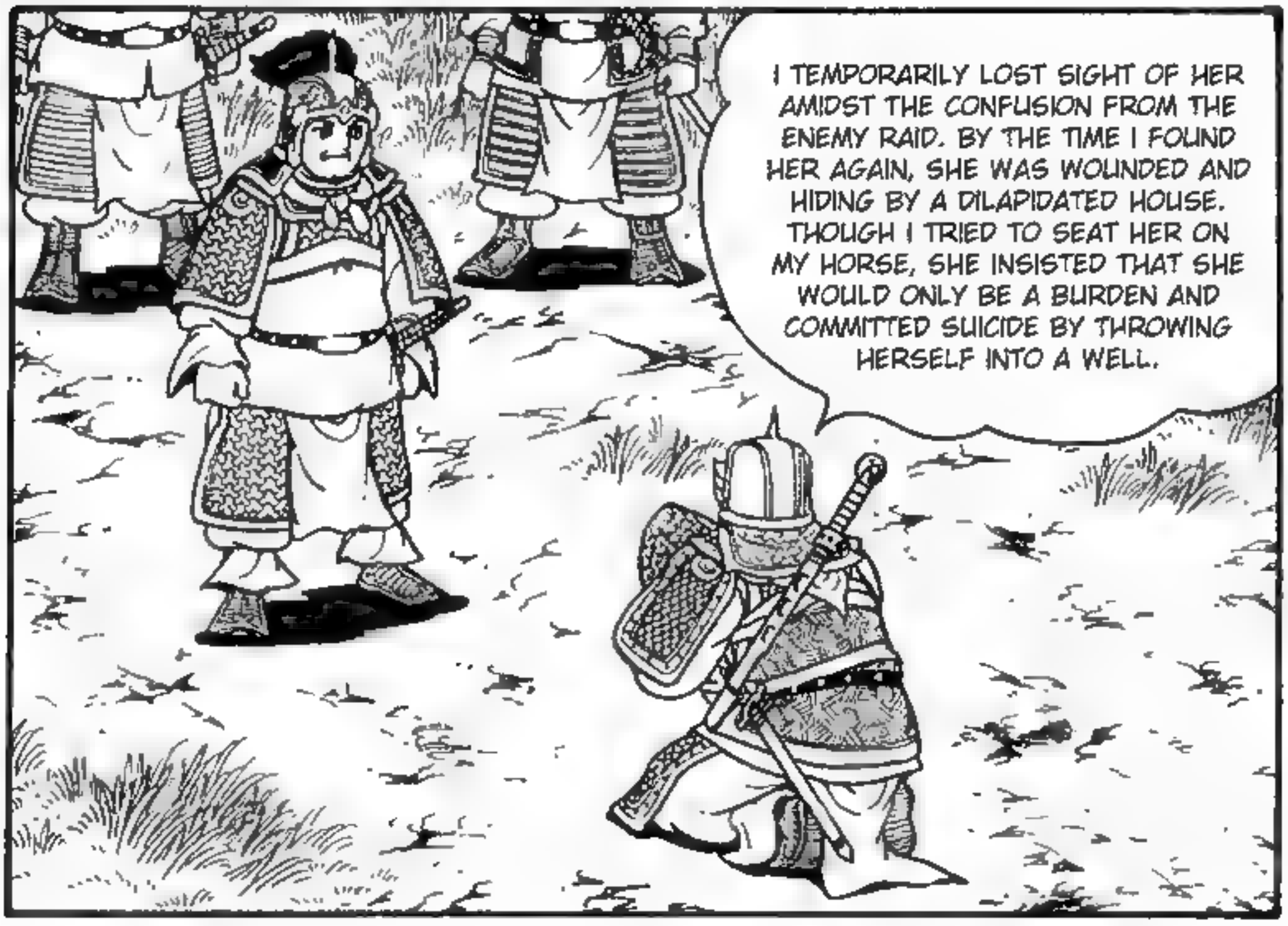
MY LORD!

FORGIVE ME, SIR.


THOUGH I'VE MANAGED TO KEEP MY LORD'S SON SAFE, I'M AFRAID LADY MI IS...

WHY, WHAT'S WRONG?


WHAT HAPPENED TO MY WIFE?


I TEMPORARILY LOST SIGHT OF HER AMIDST THE CONFUSION FROM THE ENEMY RAID. BY THE TIME I FOUND HER AGAIN, SHE WAS WOUNDED AND HIDING BY A DILAPIDATED HOUSE. THOUGH I TRIED TO SEAT HER ON MY HORSE, SHE INSISTED THAT SHE WOULD ONLY BE A BURDEN AND COMMITTED SUICIDE BY THROWING HERSELF INTO A WELL.

IS A DOU UNIN-JURED?*

I... I SEE...

YES, HE'S SOUND ASLEEP.

TAKE THIS CHILD AWAY FROM MY SIGHT!

*A DOU IS ALSO KNOWN AS LIU SHAN

FORGIVE ME, ZHAO ZILONG.

YET, CRUEL AS IT MAY SOUND, A MERE BABY CAN BE EASILY REPLACED WHEREAS A LOYAL WARRIOR IS IRREPLACEABLE. IT DEEPLY SADDENS ME THAT MY SELFISH HEART OF A FATHER ALMOST LED YOU TO YOUR DEATH. THERE IS NO BABY ON EARTH THAT'S WORTH GIVING YOU UP IN EXCHANGE.

AS A FATHER, IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT I LOVE MY CHILD. A SINGLE CRY OR SMILE FROM MY SON IS ENOUGH TO MELT MY HEART AND MAKE ME FORGET MY DUTIES AS A LORD.

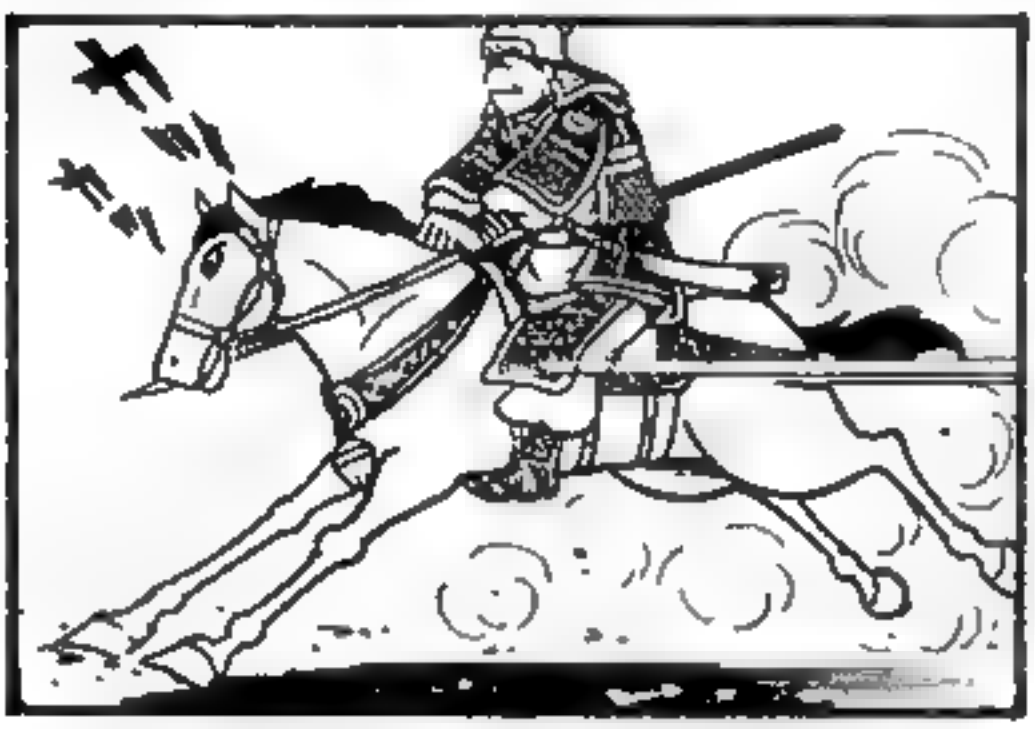
LISTEN TO ME WELL. I AM IN NO WAY UNAPPRECIATIVE OF YOUR EFFORTS IN SAVING MY SON.

I, ZHAO YUN ZILONG, VOW TO NEVER FORGET MY LORD'S KIND WORDS!

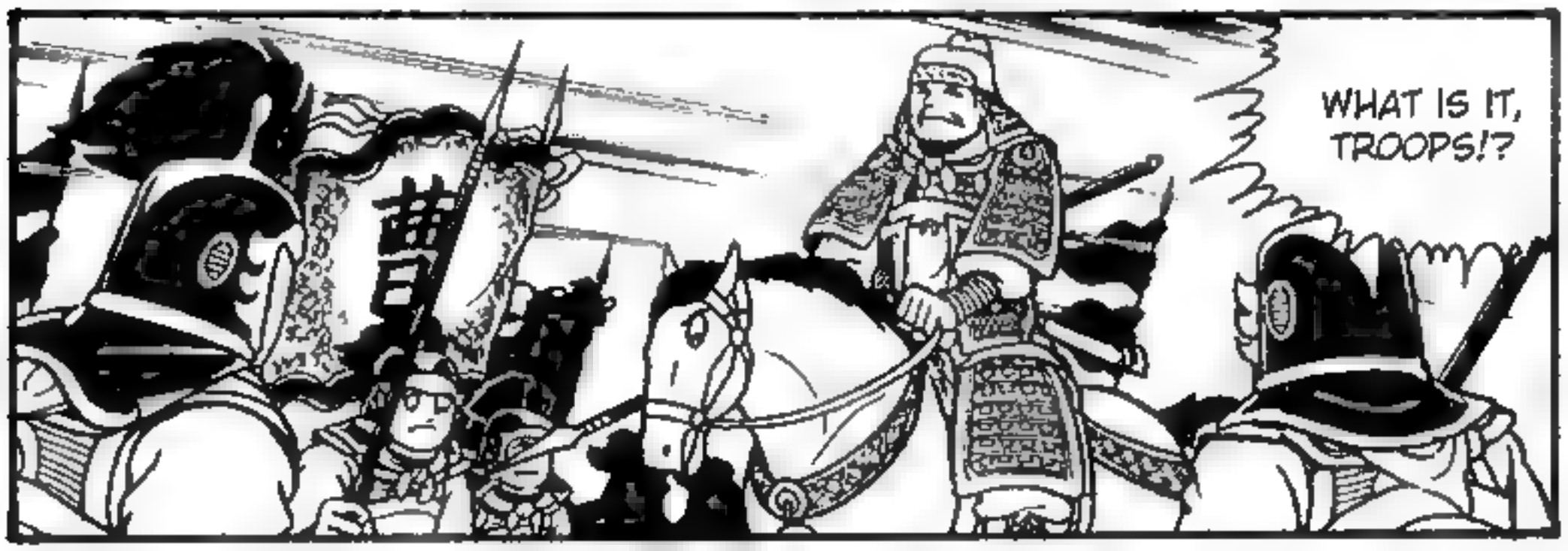
CHANGBAN BRIDGE

LET US MAKE SURE THAT TONIGHT WILL BE THE DAY WHEN WE FINISH OFF LIU BEI FOR GOOD!
I'M SURE THAT BY FOLLOWING WHERE ZHAO ZILONG RAN OFF TO, WE CAN FIND LIU BEI.

HM?



YES, SIR.
GO SEE WHAT'S THE MATTER UP AHEAD.


WHAT IS IT, TROOPS!?

A LONE ENEMY SOLDIER?

YES BUT HE'S HELLISHLY STRONG, SIR!

THERE'S A LONE ENEMY SOLDIER ON CHANGBAN BRIDGE THAT'S SLAUGHTERING ALL THE MEN WHO PURSUED AFTER ZHAO ZILONG!

HE'S OVER THAT WAY.

SHOW ME THIS FELLOW.

AFTER ME, TROOPS.

THAT'S HIM, SIR!

ATTACK HIM AT ONCE!

AH!

GULP!

CRAP...

T-T-THAT'S *THE* ZHANG FEI!

IT'S ZHANG FEI!

B-B-BUT SIR, THAT'S THE INFAMOUS ZHANG FEI WHO'S SAID TO BE ABLE TO KILL 1000 MEN ALL BY HIMSELF!

I SAID ATTACK!

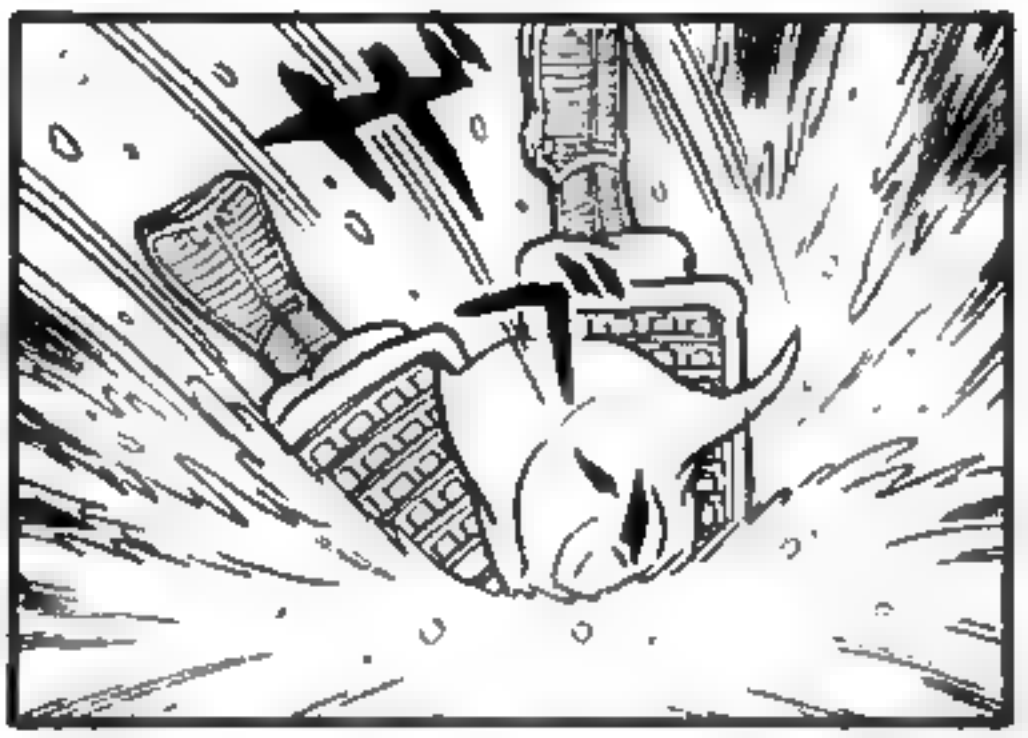
COWARDS! AND YET YOU DARE CALL YOURSELF A SOLDIER OF CAO CAO'S ELITE ARMY!?

B-BUT...

FIERCE HE MAY BE, HE'S STILL ONLY A SINGLE MAN!

FOLLOW MY LEAD!

PREPARE YOUR-SELF!



GAHH!

AGHHH!

UGH!

CALM DOWN AND COLLECT YOURSELVES!

CHAN-CELLOR!

IT'S THE CHANCELLOR!

AHH!

SO THAT'S GUAN YU'S BROTHER ...

I AM ZHANG FEI YIDE, SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI XUANDE. WHO DARES FIGHT WITH ME!?

WELL, WELL. IF IT ISN'T *CAO CAO* AND HIS FLUNKIES!

I REMARKED THAT GUAN YU WAS SURELY THE GREATEST WARRIOR ALIVE BUT HE REJECTED MY COMPLIMENTS, SAYING THAT EVEN HE WAS OUTMATCHED BY HIS YOUNGER BROTHER IN RAW STRENGTH. IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, HIS YOUNGER BROTHER WAS ZHANG FEI YIDE, A MAN WHO BRINGS FORTH A SHOWER OF BLOOD TO EVERY BATTLEFIELD.

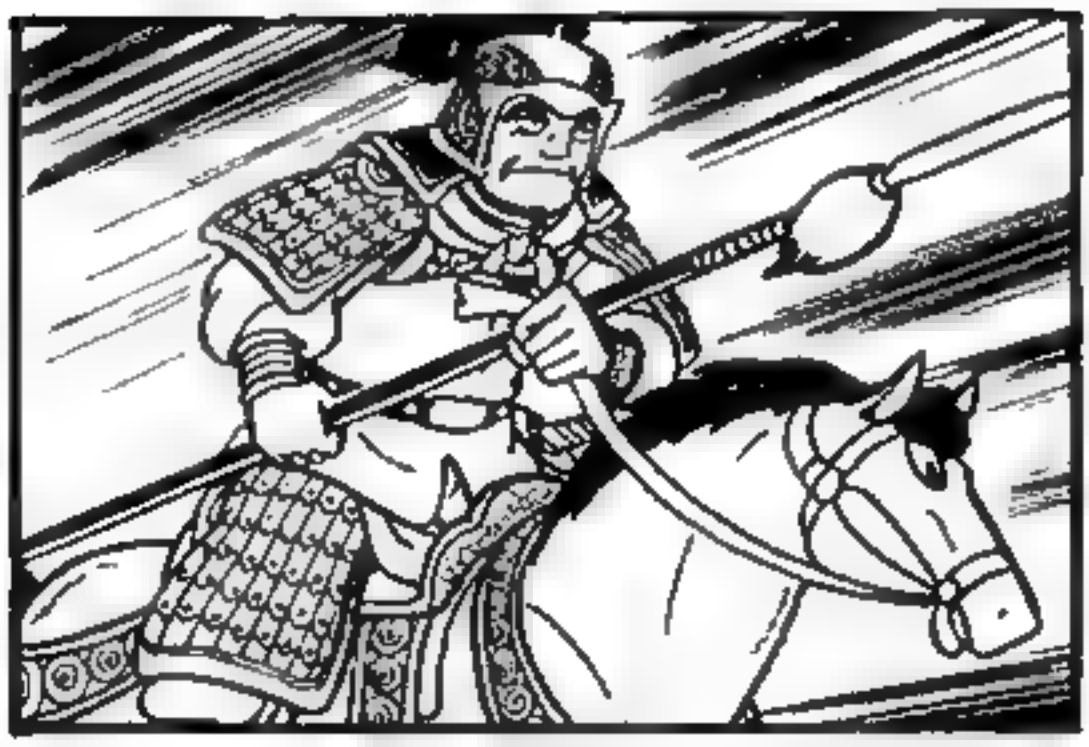
SEEING HIM REMINDS ME OF THE DAY WHEN GUAN YU SLEW YAN LIANG WITH A SINGLE BLOW.

ALLOW ME TO DEMONSTRATE TO SIR THAT WE ARE NOT LACKING IN WARRIORS AS FIERCE AS ZHANG FEI

FOR WHAT REASON DOES MY LORD HESITATE?

SO THIS IS THE VERY ZHANG FEI THAT GUAN YU SPOKE OF...

NO, WAIT!



HMPH, QUITE COCKY FOR A MERE RUNT...
I, XIAHOU BA, SHALL BE YOUR MATCH!

AS IF I'D BE SATISFIED BY A PIPSQUEAK LIKE YOU! SEND OUT CAO CAO!

AGHHH!

HE SWATTED XIAHOU BA AWAY WITH ONE HAND!

W-WE'RE DOOMED...

HM?

WHAT TO DO...

THAT MUST MEAN THERE ARE ENEMIES HIDING IN THE FOREST FOR AN AMBUSH.

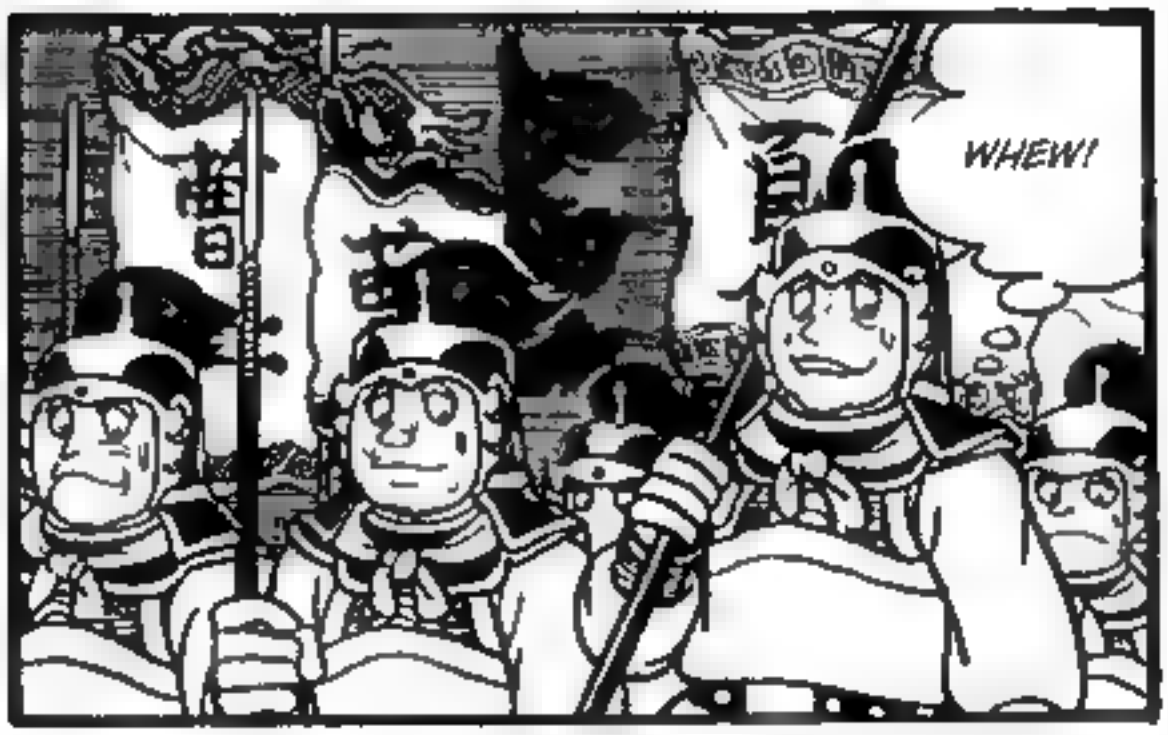
LOOK. THE TREE BRANCHES BEHIND THE BRIDGE ARE SHAKING.

OF COURSE... NO MATTER HOW MIGHTY THIS ZHANG FEI IS, THERE'S NO WAY HE'D DARE TO STAND ALONE AGAINST MY TENS OF THOUSANDS OF SOLDIERS.

KONGMING EASILY DEFEATED MY 100,000 STRONG ARMIES TWICE BEFORE. WE CANNOT RUSH HEADLONG INTO HIS TRAP.

曹

THIS MUST BE ANOTHER ONE OF ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING'S TRAPS.

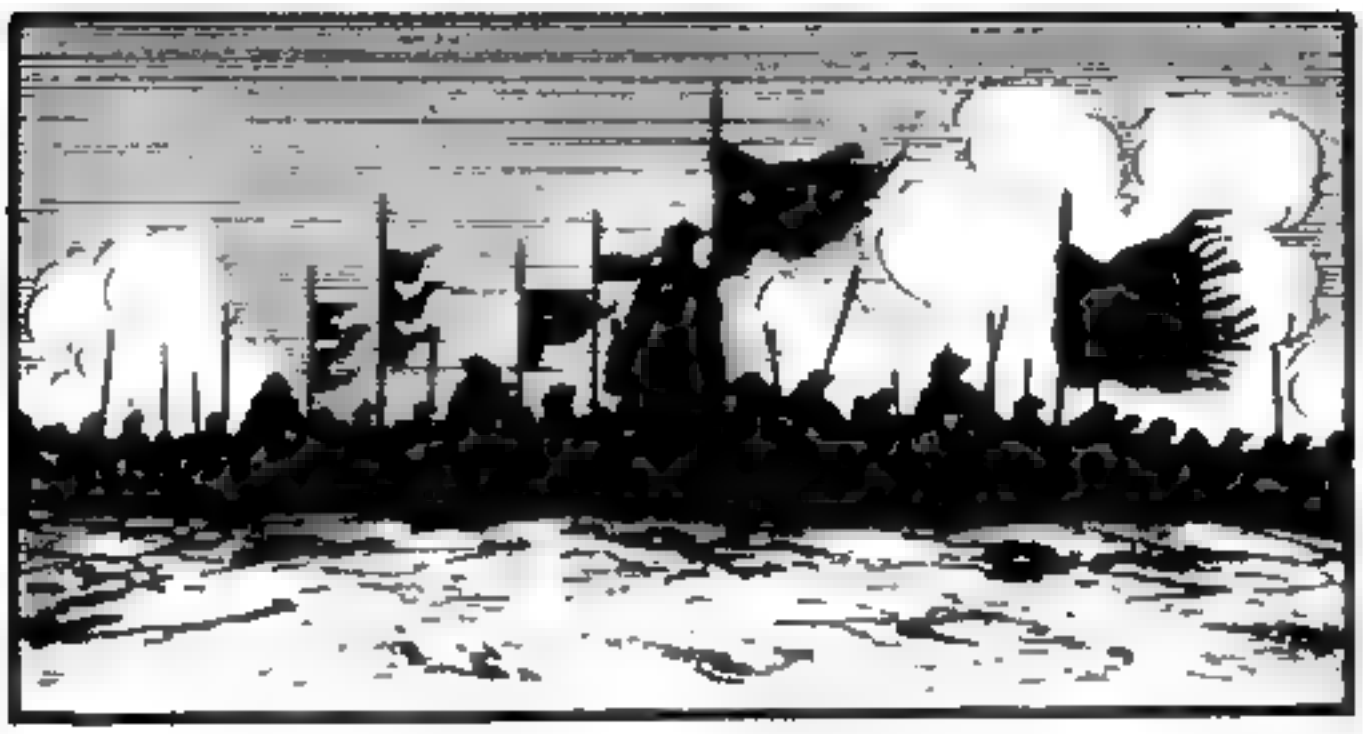

WHEW!

ALL UNITS RETREAT FOR THE TIME BEING!

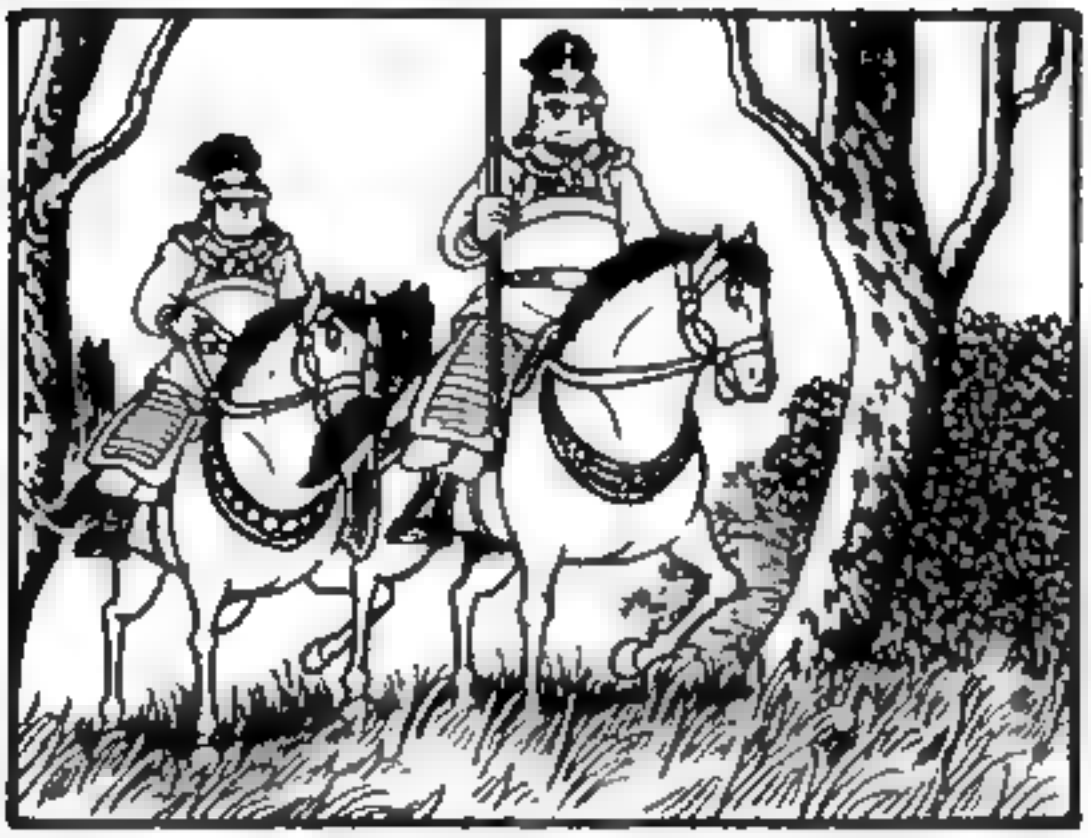
CHARGE!

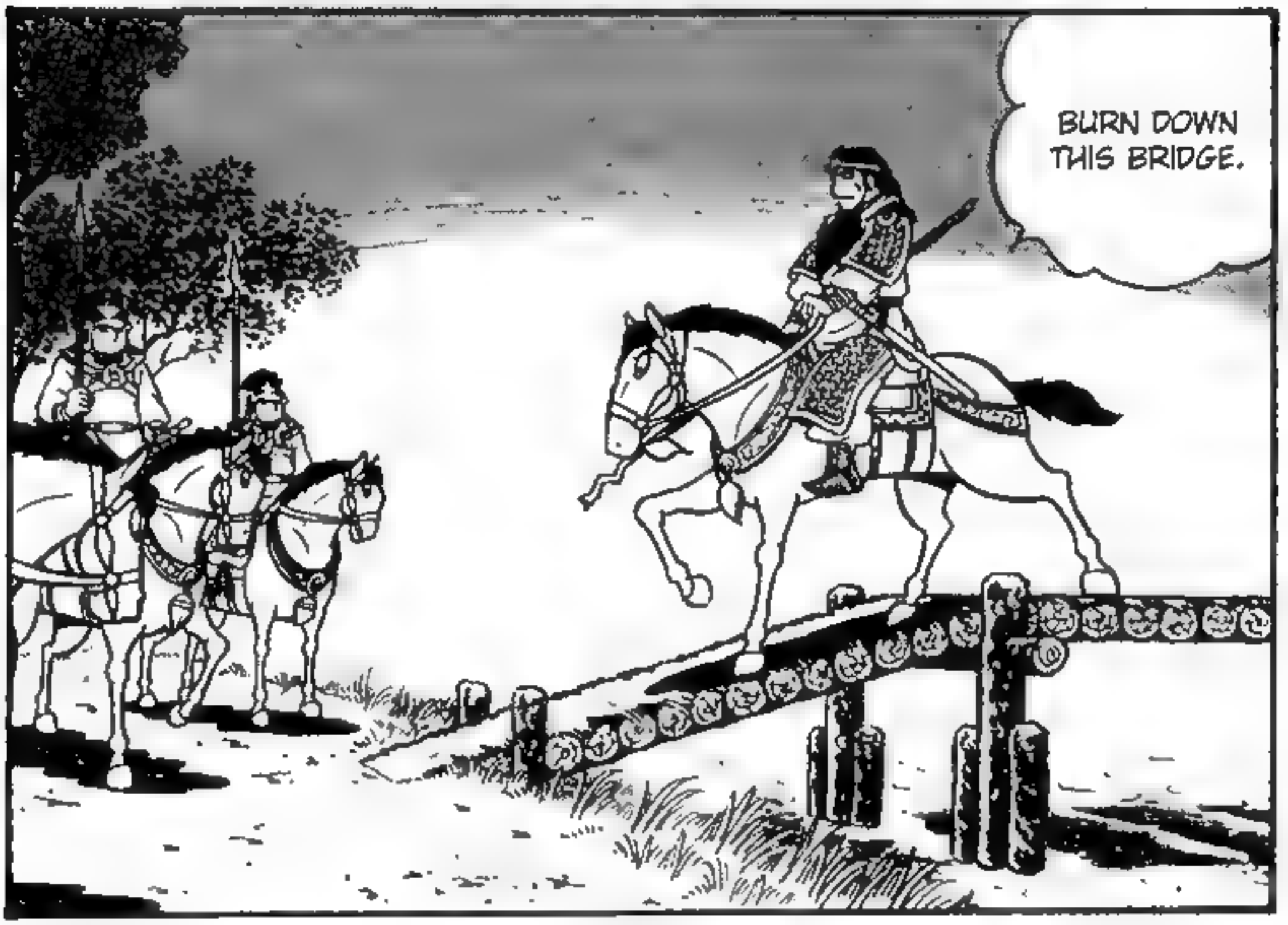
HMPH, AS IF WE'D FALL FOR YOUR TRICKS AGAIN!

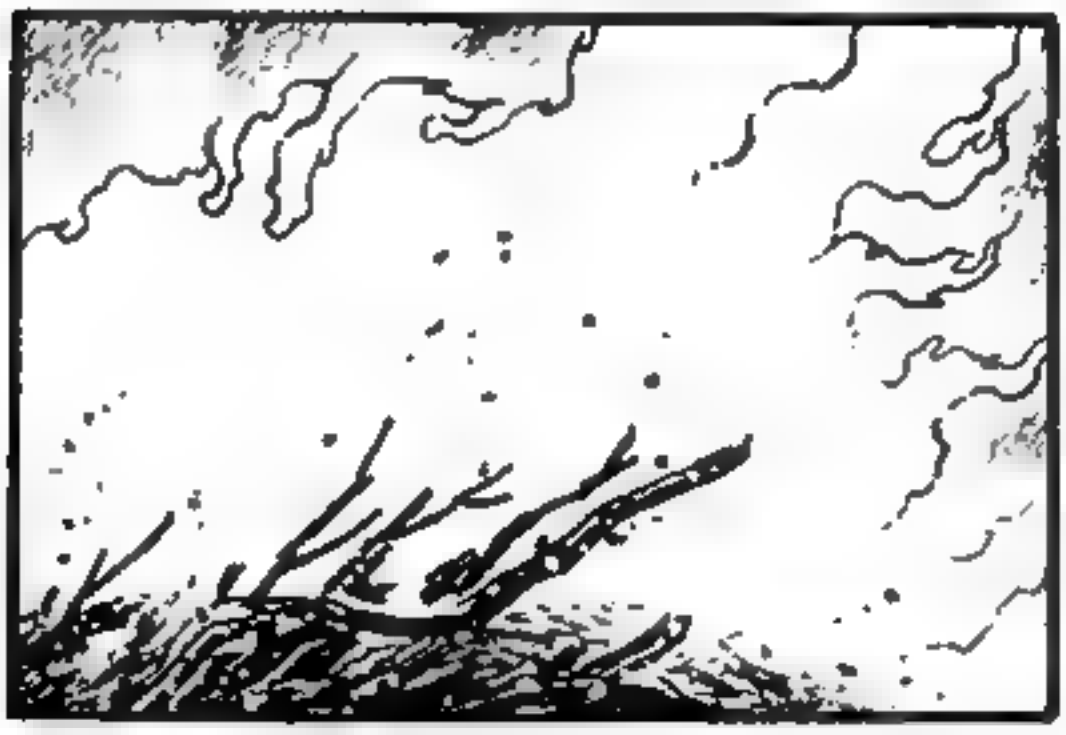
RUNNING AWAY, CAO CAO!? FIGHT ME, YOU COWARD!

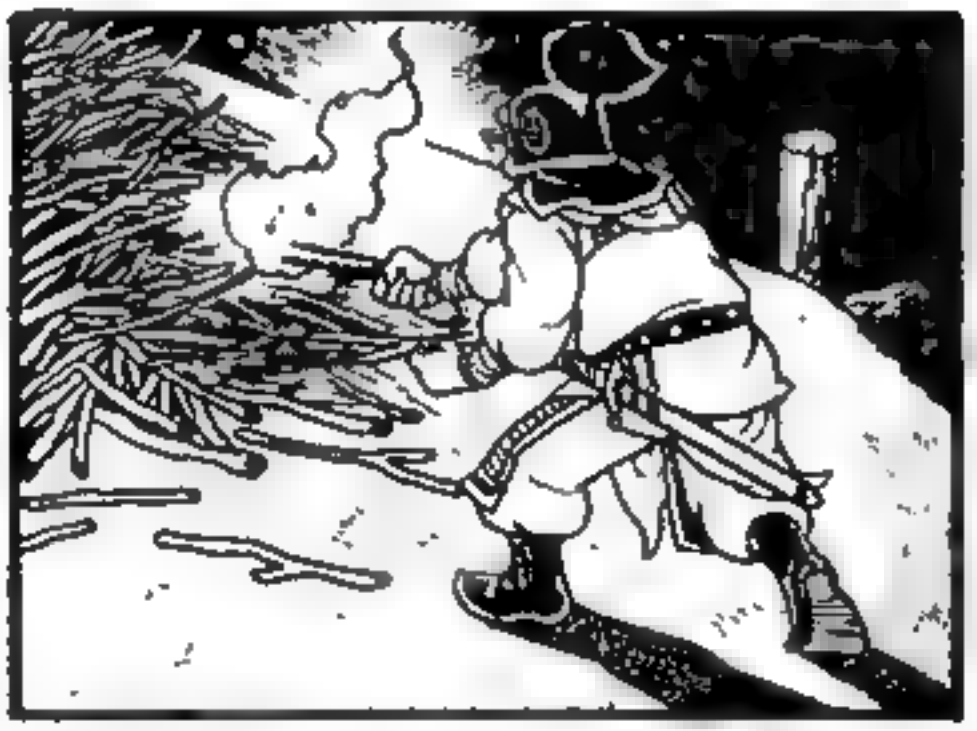


COME OUT, MEN!




BURN DOWN THIS BRIDGE.





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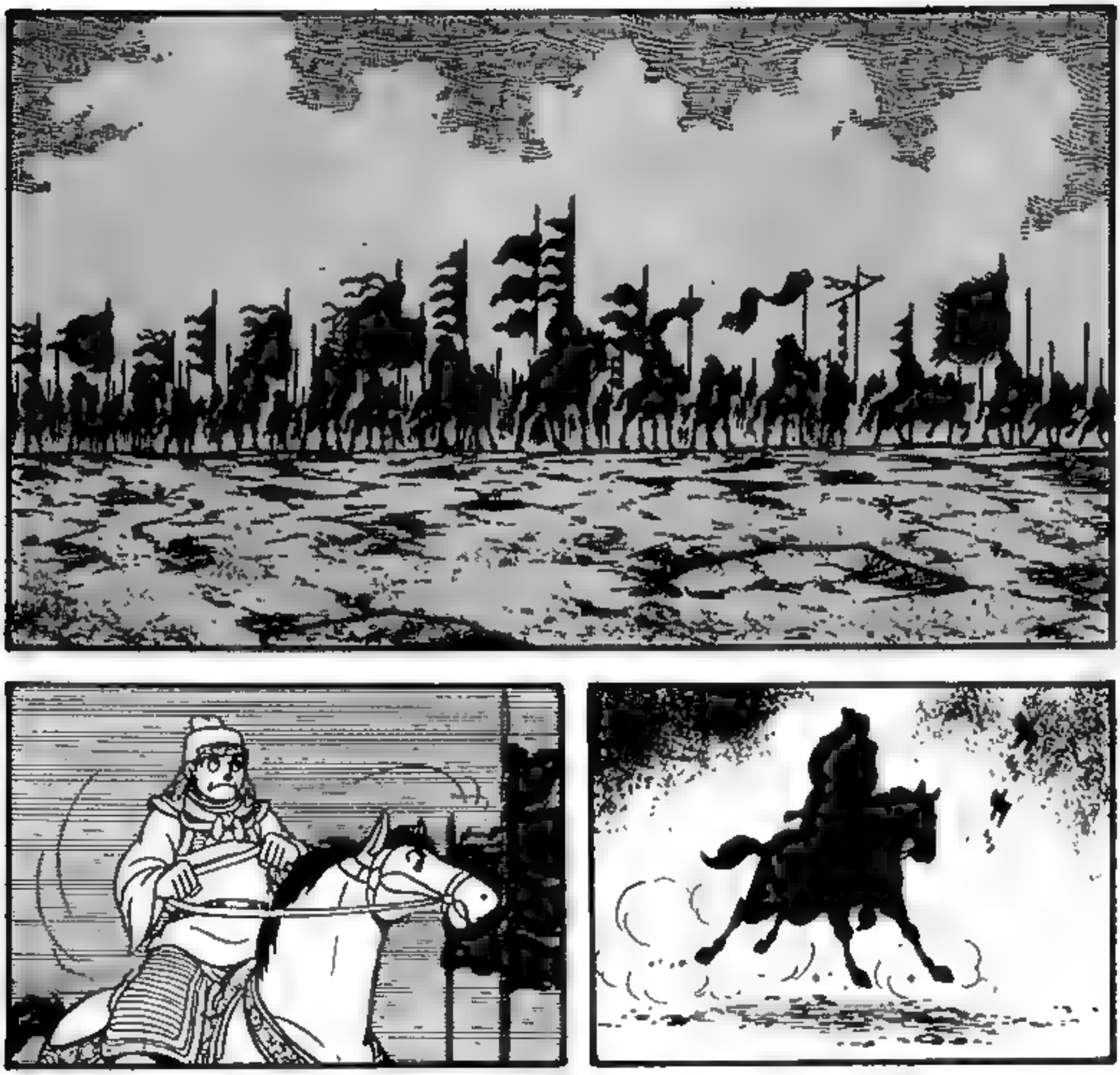
LET US RETURN BACK TO OUR LORD AT ONCE!
HAHAHA. WITH THIS, THEY SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO PURSUE US FOR AWHILE.

REINFORCEMENTS



AHH!

HE BURNT DOWN THE BRIDGE?

BUT SINCE THEY BURNT IT DOWN, THEN THAT MEANS THERE WAS NO TRAP TO BEGIN WITH. IT WAS ONLY A BLUFF TO HINDER OUR PURSUIT...

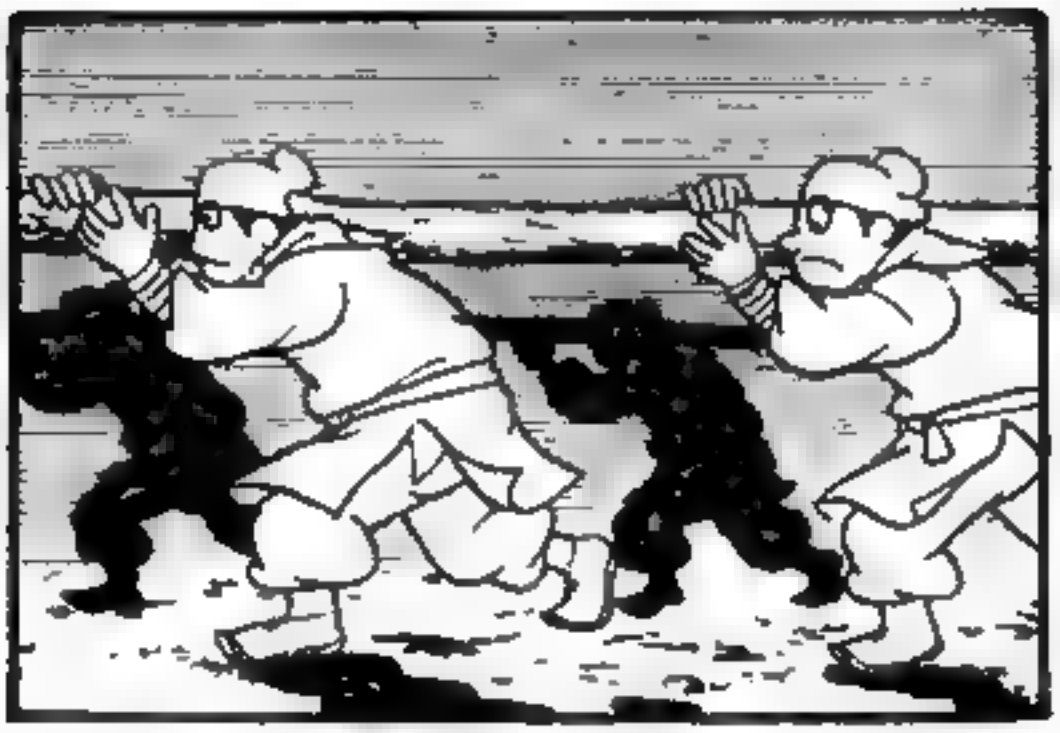
IF THE ENEMIES HAD REALLY SET UP A TRAP, THEN THEY WOULDN'T HAVE BURNT DOWN THE BRIDGE.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, CHANCELLOR?

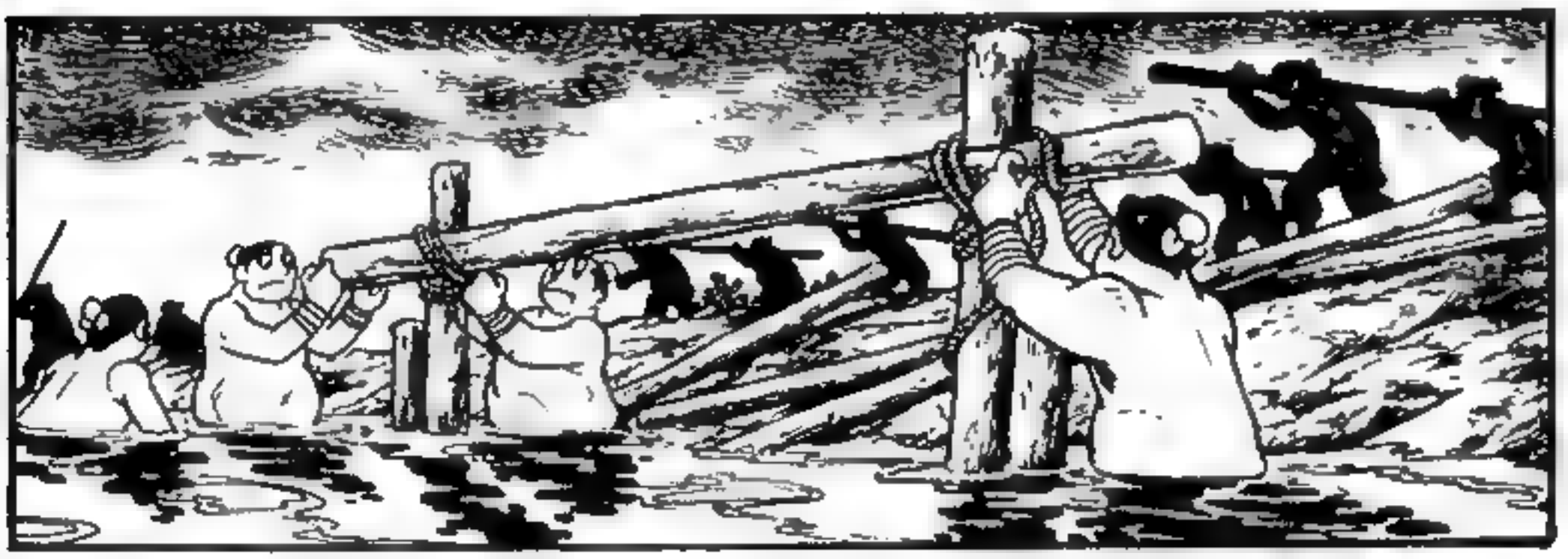
YES, SIR!

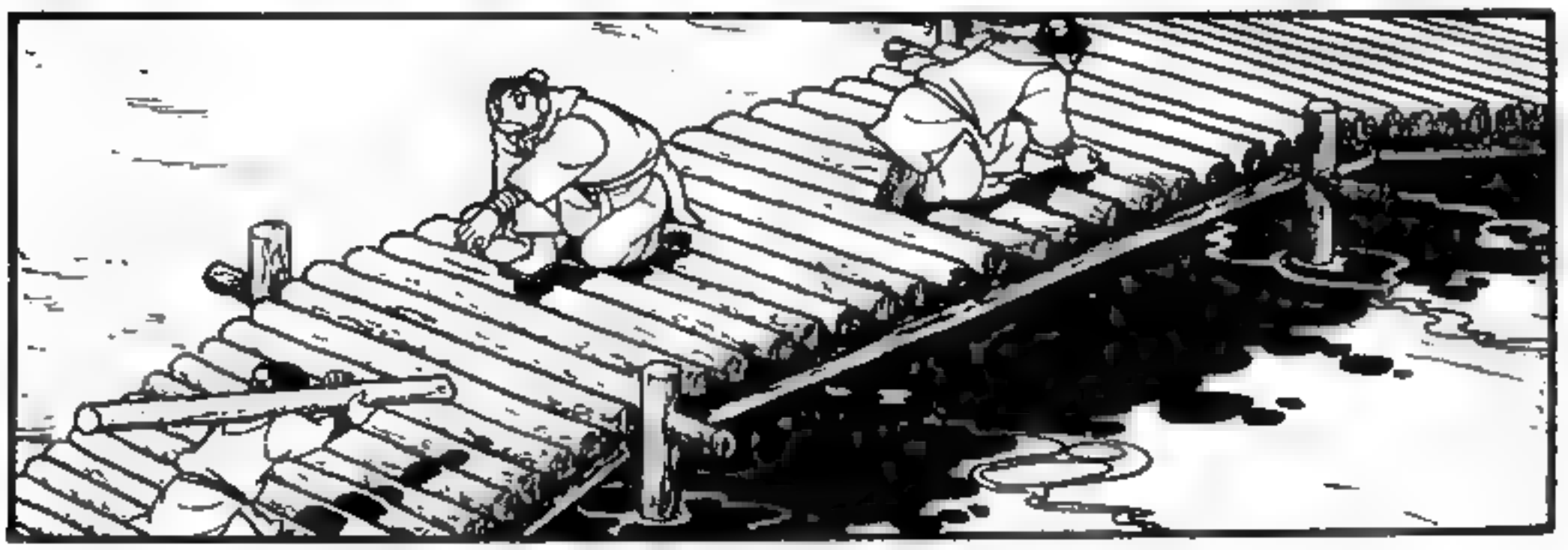
曲曰

I WANT THE MEN TO CONSTRUCT 3 BRIDGES IMMEDIATELY!



PUT UP THE BRIDGES AS FAST AS POSSIBLE!





COMMENCE THE PUSUIT OF LIU BEI'S FORCES! WE MUST NOT LET THEM GET AWAY!

THE BRIDGES ARE IN PLACE, CHANCELLOR.

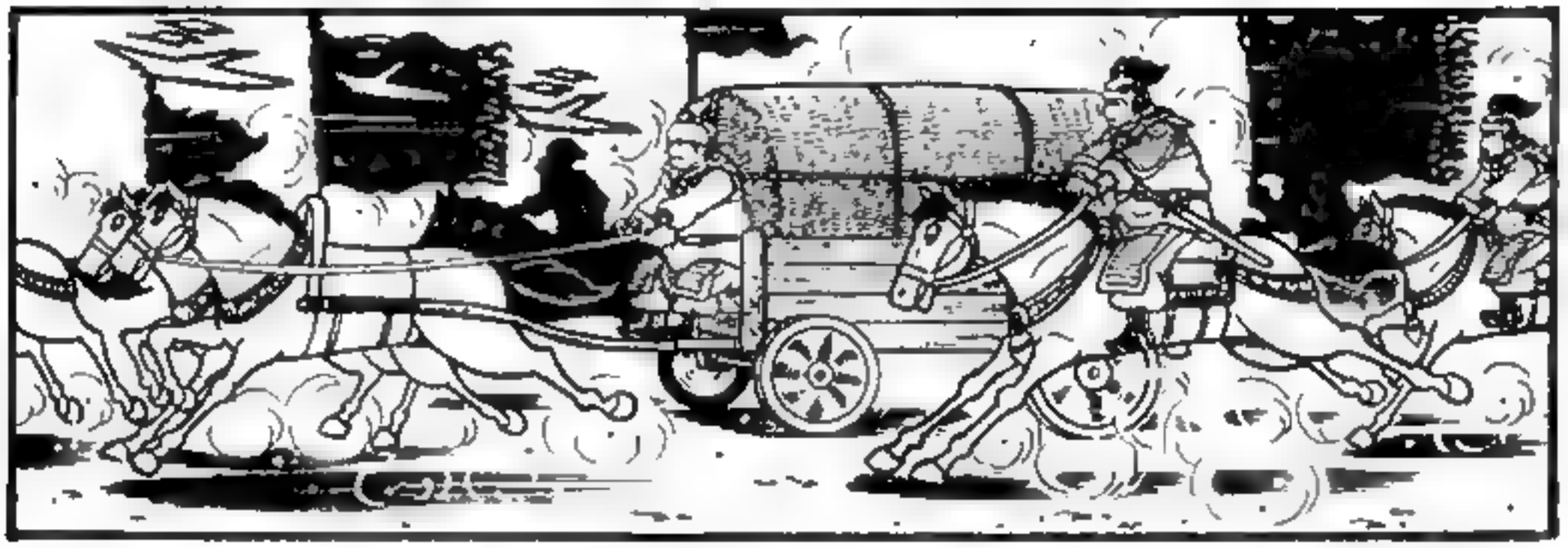
曹曰

CAO CAO'S FORCES HAVE RESUMED PURSUIT!

MY LORD!

THEY'VE ALREADY BUILT ANOTHER BRIDGE!?

WE SHALL BE ANNHILATED IF WE'RE CAUGHT OUT IN THE OPEN HERE! LET US MOVE AT THE FASTEST POSSIBLE SPEED!



PANT
PANT

HUFF
HUFF

AH!

CHANCELLOR! THE ENEMIES ARE JUST UP AHEAD!

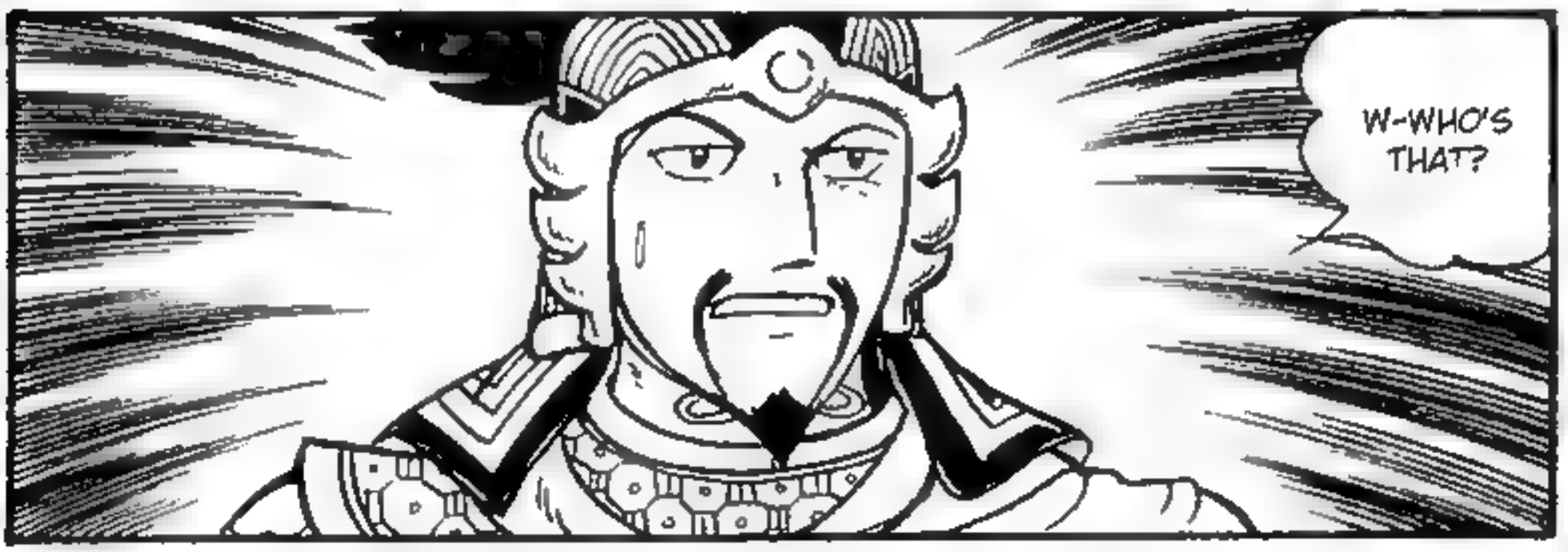
WHAT IS IT?

CHANCELLOR, WAIT!

CRUSH THEM AT ONCE!

曲口

OVER THERE, SIR!
曲口


W-WHO'S THAT?

STANDING IN THE DISTANCE WAS NONE OTHER THAN GUAN YU WHO HAD SUCCESSFULLY RETURNED WITH REINFORCEMENTS

G-GUAN YU!?

AH, I WAS ALMOST GETTING TIRED WAITING FOR YOU.

IF HE'S BEEN WAITING HERE FOR US, THEN THIS MUST BE ANOTHER TRAP BY KONGMING!

STOP THE PURSUIT, IT'S ANOTHER TRAP BY KONGMING!

RETREAT! RETREAT!

曹

HAHA, SEEMS LIKE THEY'VE LEARNED THEIR LESSON.

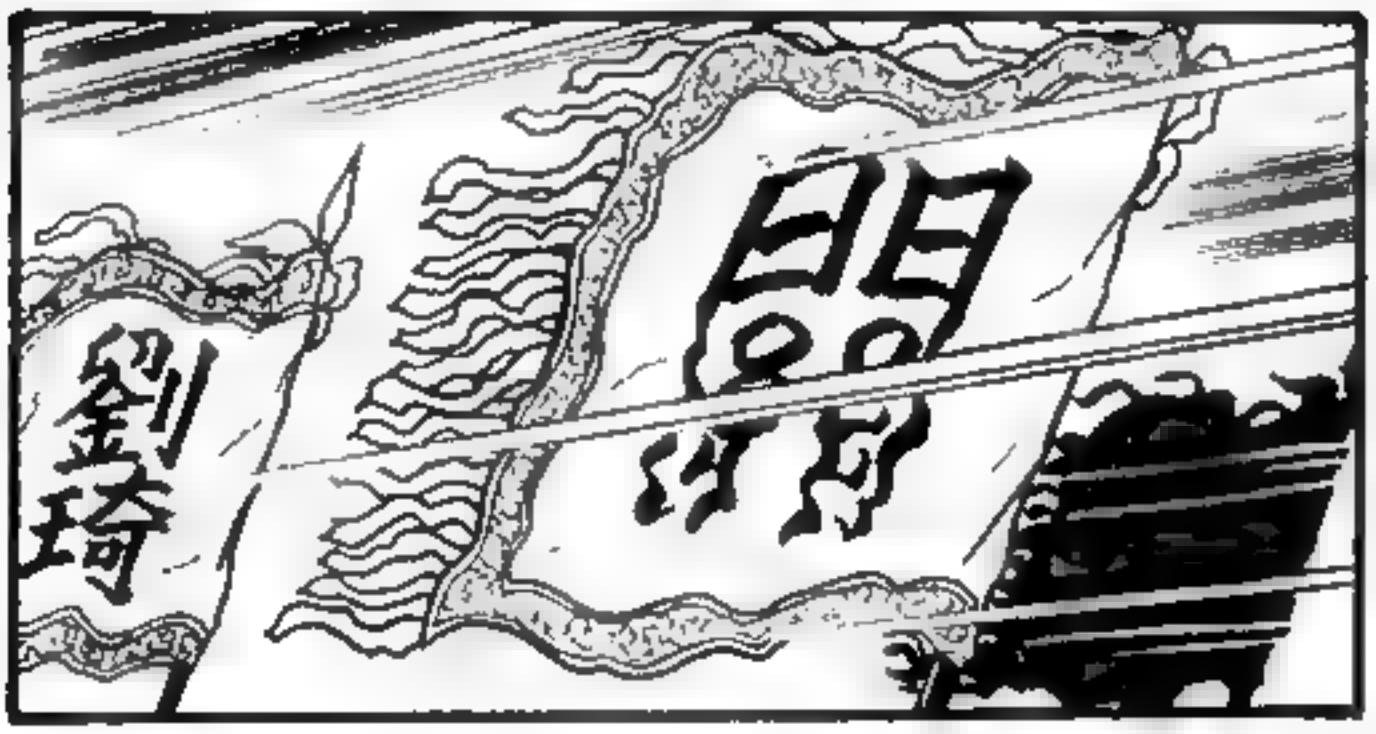
NOW THEN, LET'S HURRY BACK TO OUR LORD.

劉

HM?

ENEMIES TO OUR REAR AND THE HAN RIVER TO OUR FRONT. LOOKS LIKE WE'VE NOWHERE TO RUN...

IS THAT CAO CAO'S FORCES?
MY LORD, LOOK!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曰曰

AH! THAT FLAG...!

WHAT?
IT'S GUAN YU'S FLAG!

劉

IT'S GENERAL GUAN YU!

BRO-THER!

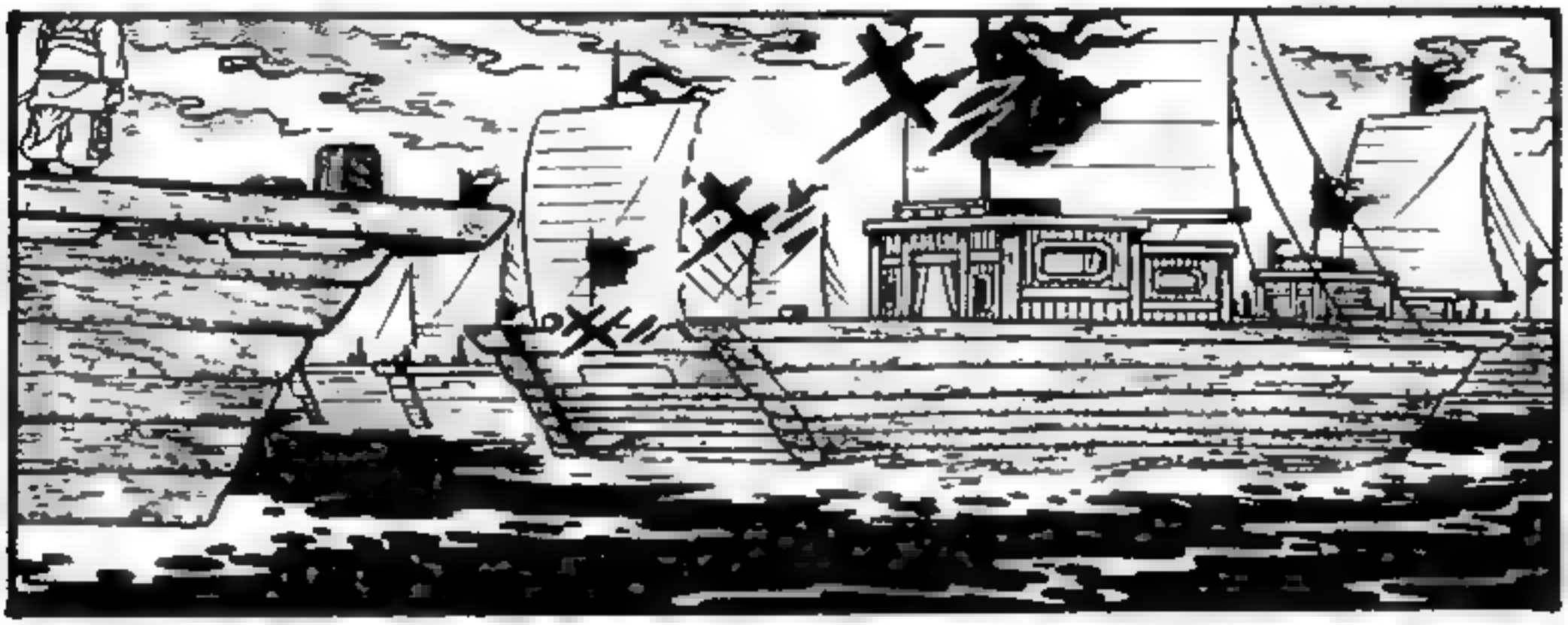
YOU CAME AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME.

MY APOLOGIES FOR ARRIVING LATE BUT I'VE SUCCESSFULLY BORROWED 10,000 MEN FROM LIU QI.

IT SEEMS THE HEAVENS HAVEN'T ABANDONED ME JUST YET.

EVERYONE GET ON THE BOATS!

AH, GOOD.
THESE ARE THE BOATS THAT WE CAME ON.



BY THE WAY, I HAVEN'T SEEN LADY MI AROUND ANYWHERE.

YES.

WE SHOULD BE SAFE FOR THE TIME BEING.

ZHAO ZILONG TOLD ME SHE THREW HERSELF INTO A WELL AFTER BEING TOO INJURED TO GO ON ANY FARTHER.

SHE PASSED AWAY...

WHA!?

I SEE...

...

ARE THEY ENEMY SHIPS!?

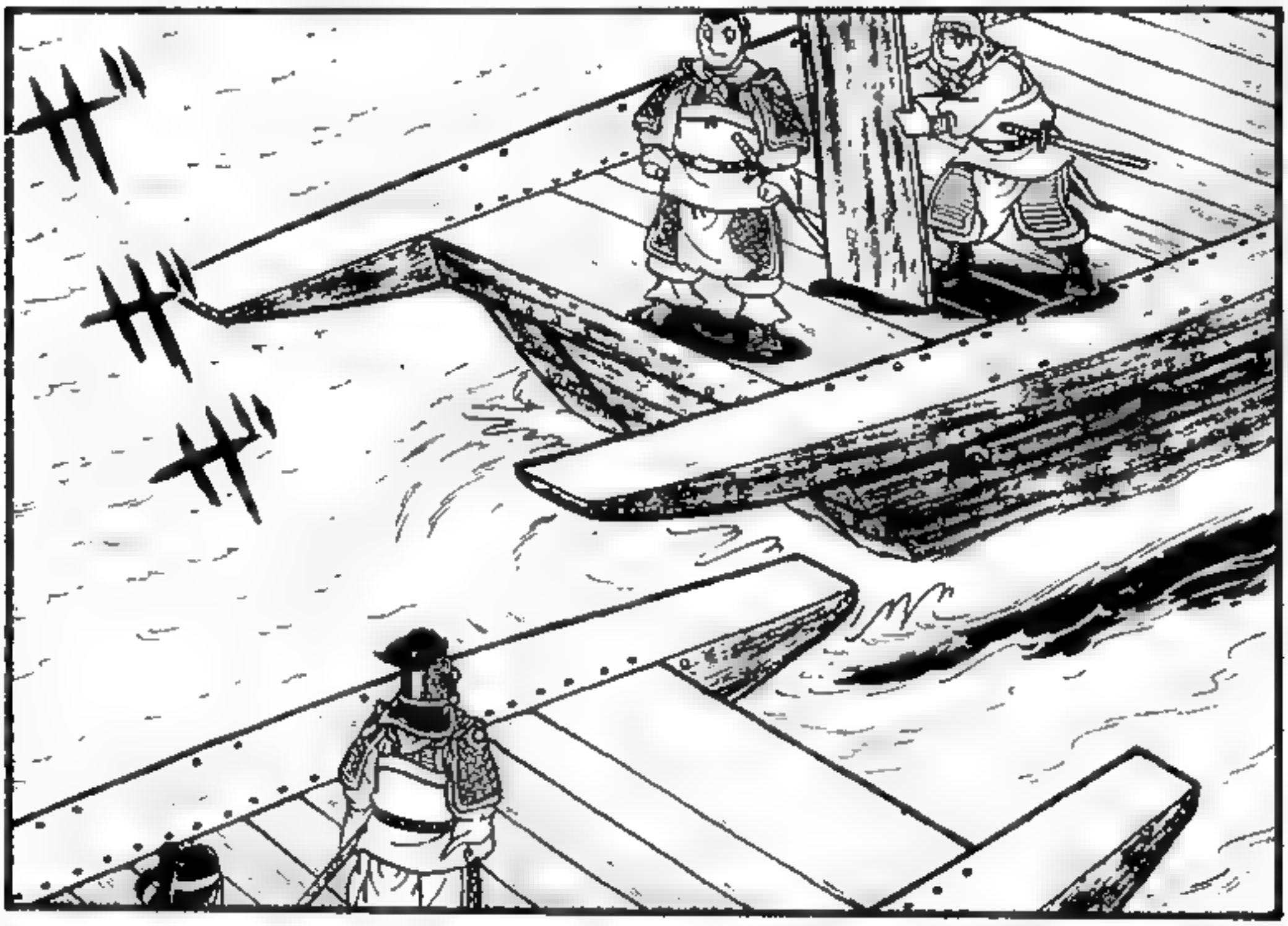
AH!

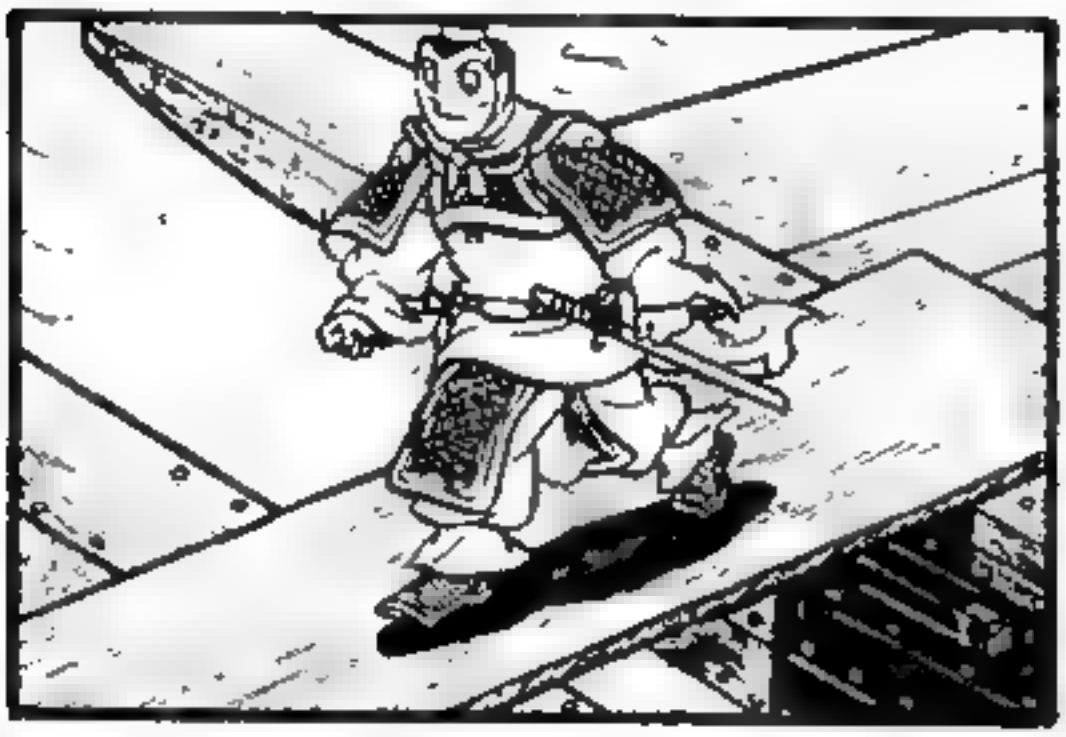
OVER HERE!

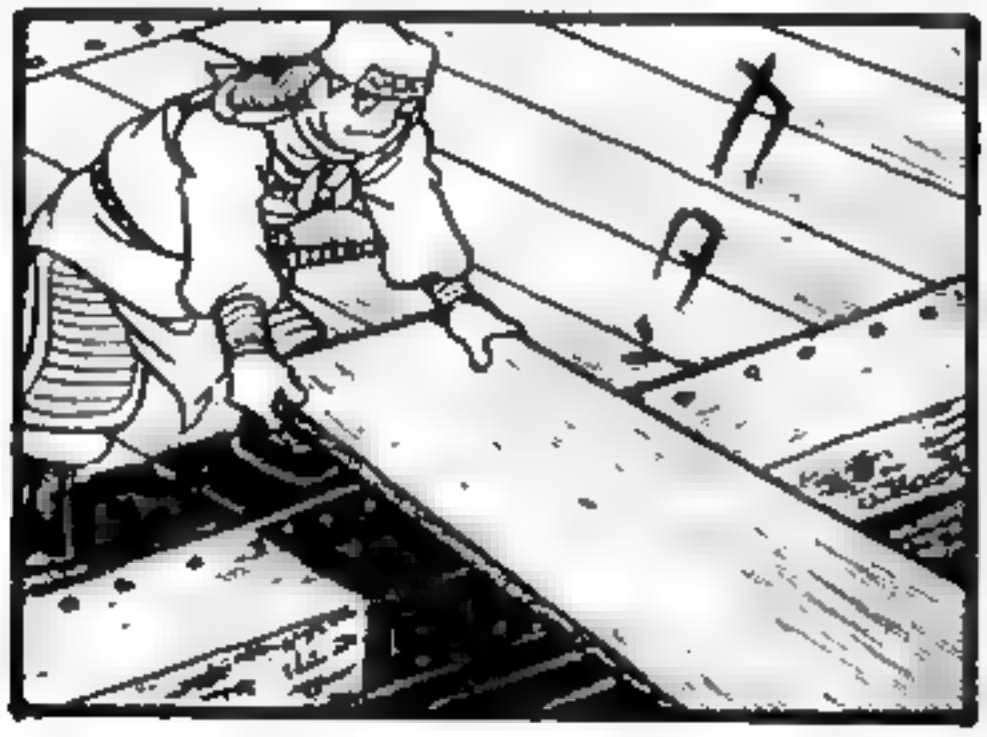
UNCLE!

I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE SAFE, UNCLE.

WHY, ISN'T THAT LIU QI?







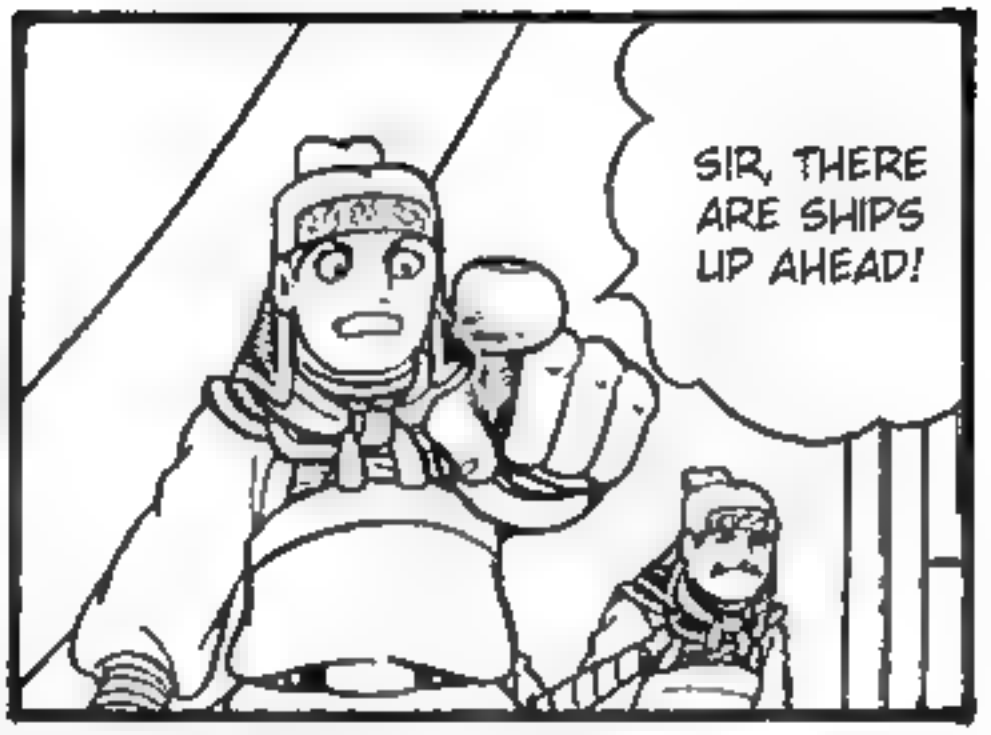
NOW LET US ALL RETURN BACK TO JIANGXIA.

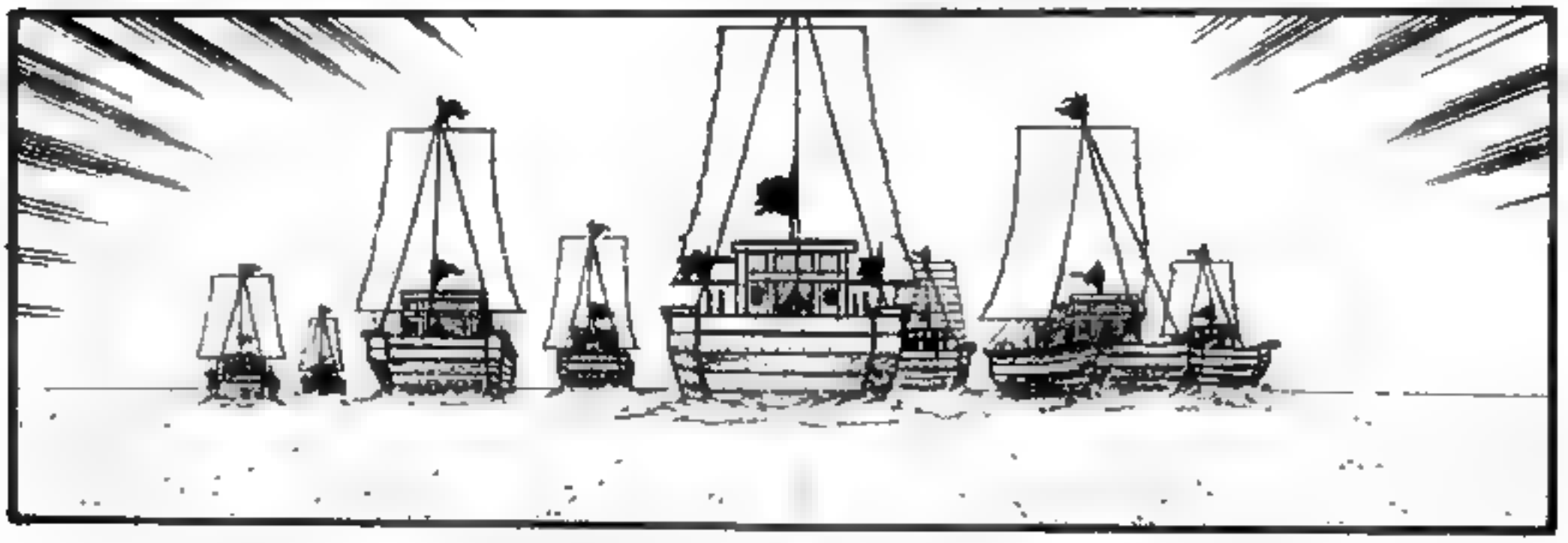
SORRY FOR ALL THIS TROUBLE.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

I HEARD FROM KONGMING THAT YOU WERE IN TROUBLE AND CAME HERE AT ONCE.

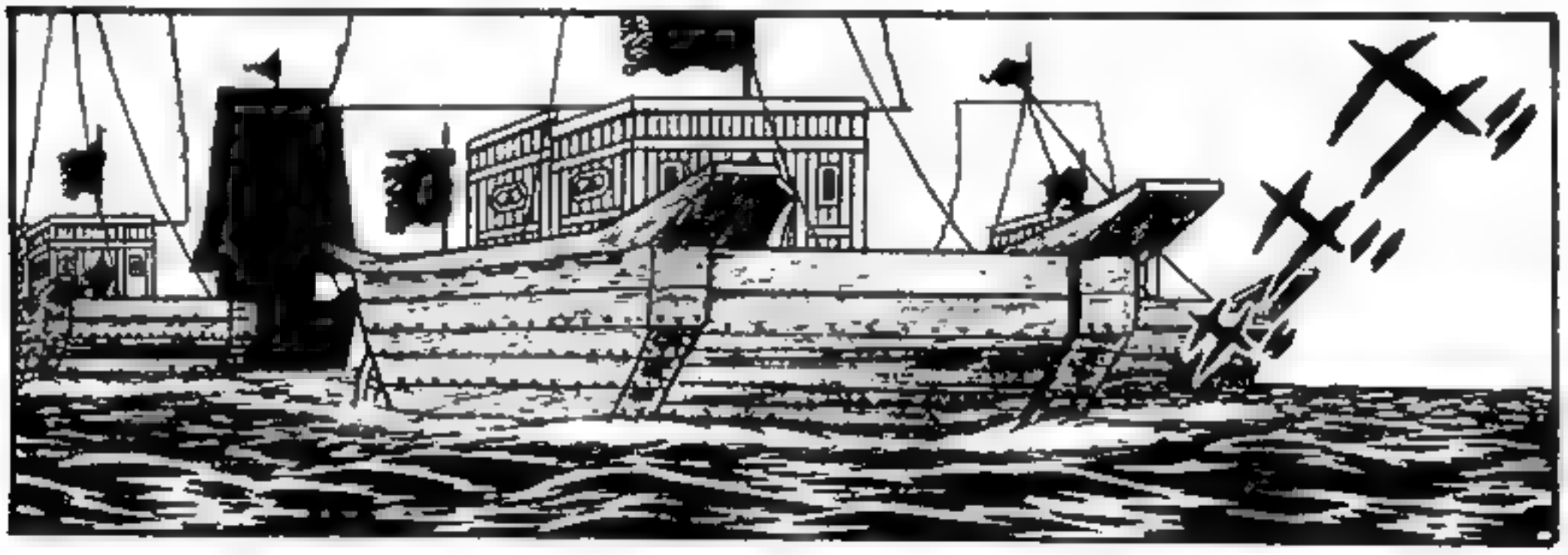
WHAT?

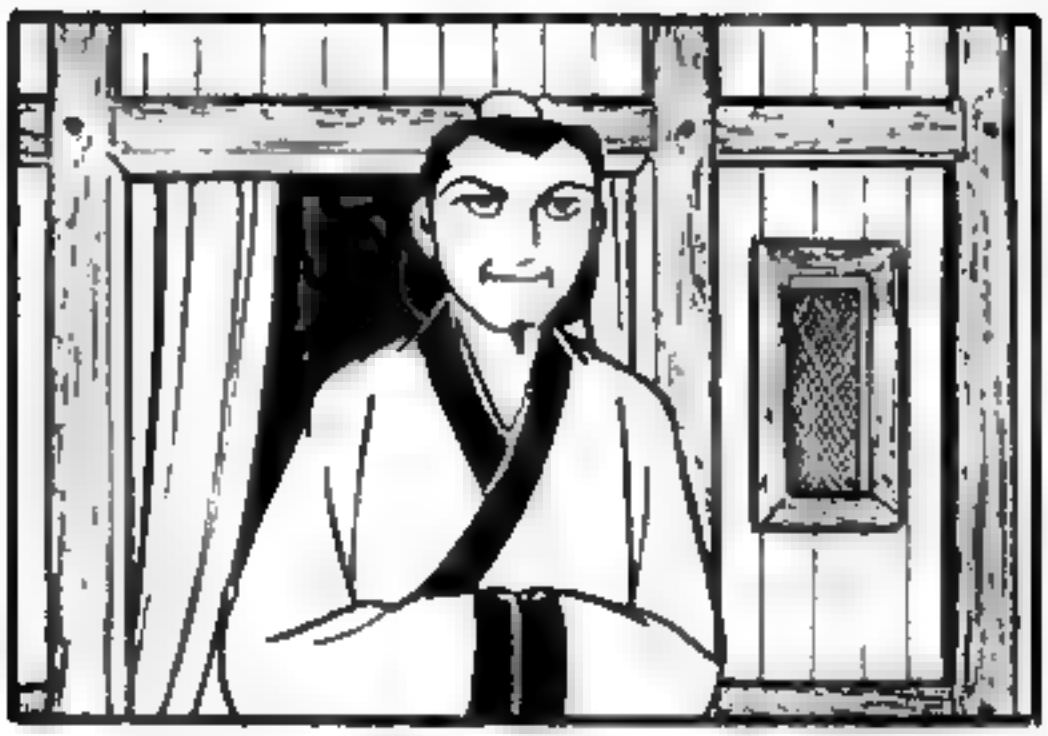

SIR, THERE ARE SHIPS UP AHEAD!

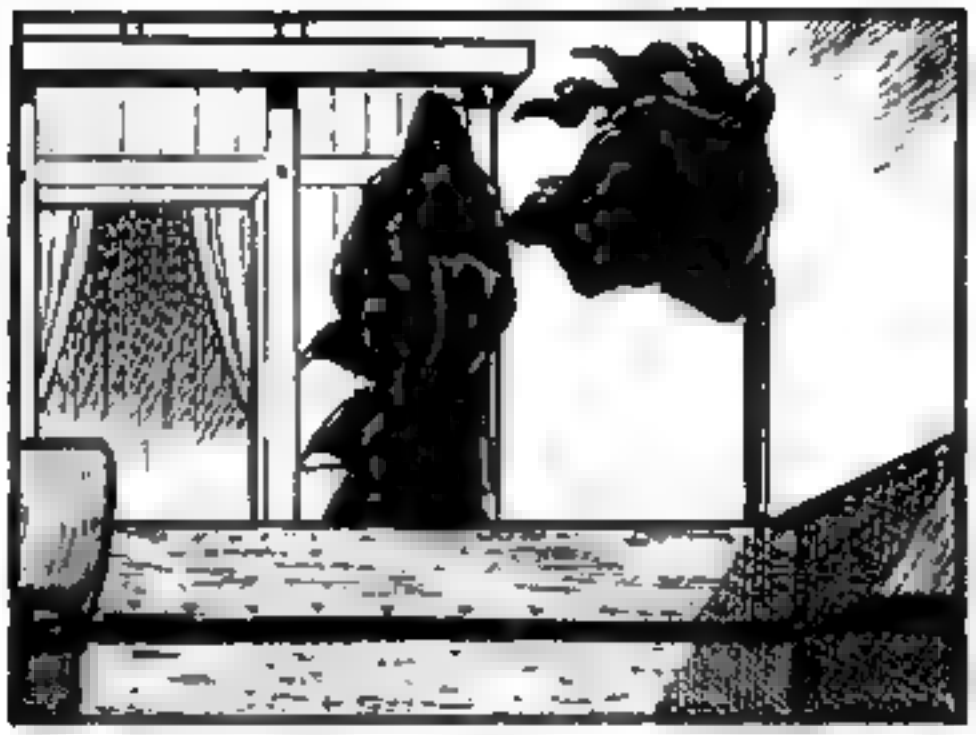


LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK BEFORE ACTING.
WHAT SHALL WE DO IF IT'S WU'S NAVY? SHOULD WE FIGHT?

THAT'S STRANGE. ALL MY TROOPS FROM JIANGXIA ARE HERE SO WHO COULD THAT BE...?







H-HOW ON EARTH DID HE KNOW WHERE TO MEET US...

IT'S KONG-MING!

PLEASE COME ON THIS BOAT.

BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW I'D BE HERE ON THE HAN RIVER?

WHY, THAT'S TERRIFIC!

IT'S A RELIEF TO SEE MY LORD IS STILL ALIVE AND WELL. I'VE BROUGHT HERE WITH ME THE SOLDIERS OF XIAKOU.

I KNEW THAT THE ENEMIES WOULD EVENTUALLY CATCH UP AND MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR MY LORD TO PROCEED ONWARDS TO JIANGLING. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, YOU WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO CHANGE DIRECTIONS AND HEAD TOWARDS THE HAN RIVER. THUS, I SENT GUAN YU TO HANJIN WHERE HE WOULD MEET UP WITH YOU AND HELP FEND OFF THE ENEMIES.

YOU'RE AS RELIABLE AS EVER.

AFTER ASKING FOR LIU QI'S ASSISTANCE, I THEN WENT TO XIAKOU AND BROUGHT OVER THESE ADDITIONAL TROOPS.

I BELIEVE IT WILL BE DANGEROUS FOR ALL OF US TO STAY TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE.

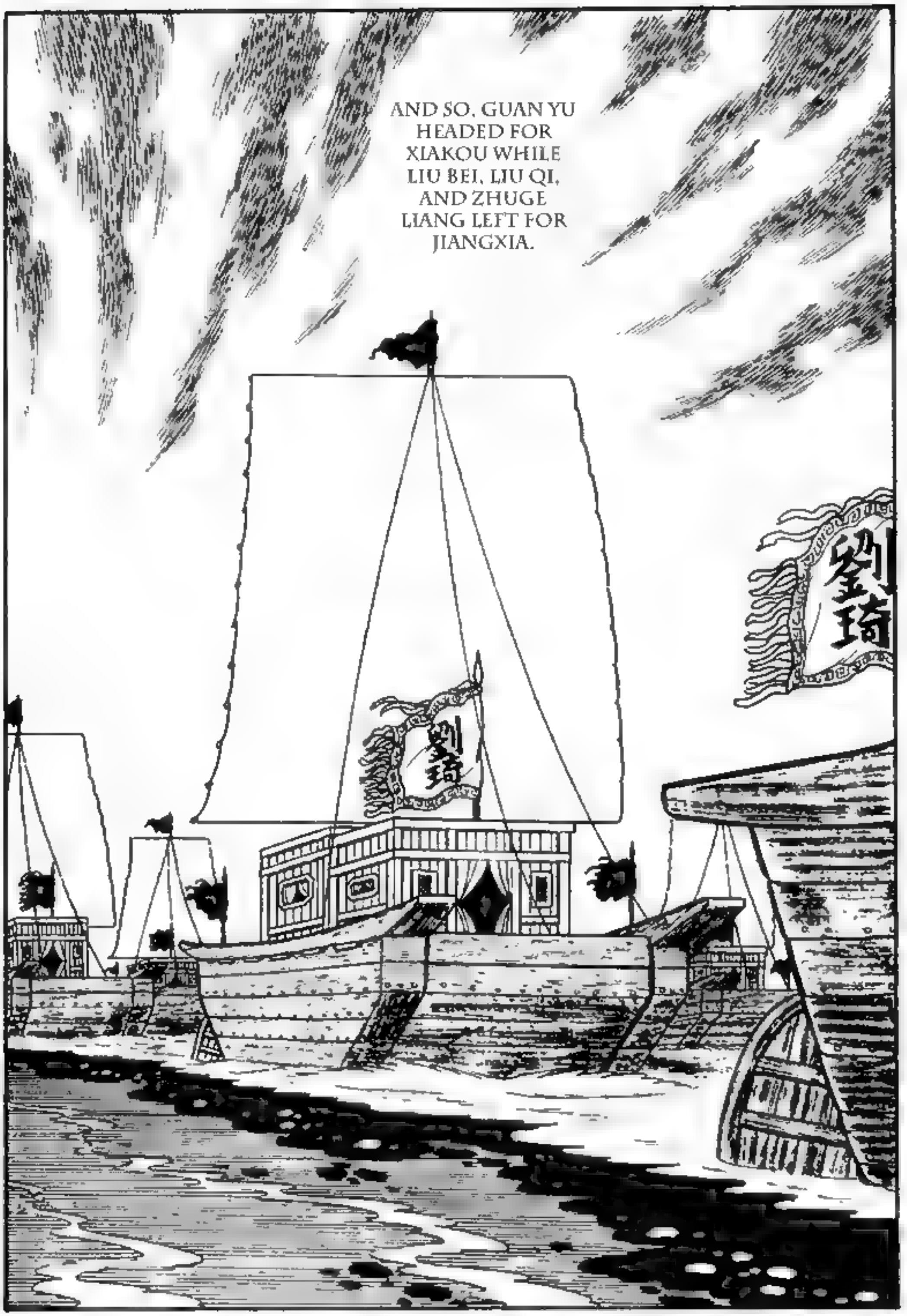
NOW THEN, WHAT SHOULD BE OUR NEXT COURSE OF ACTION?

GOOD POINT. WE'D EASILY BE SUR-ROUNDED IF WE WERE TO HOLE UP IN ONE PLACE.

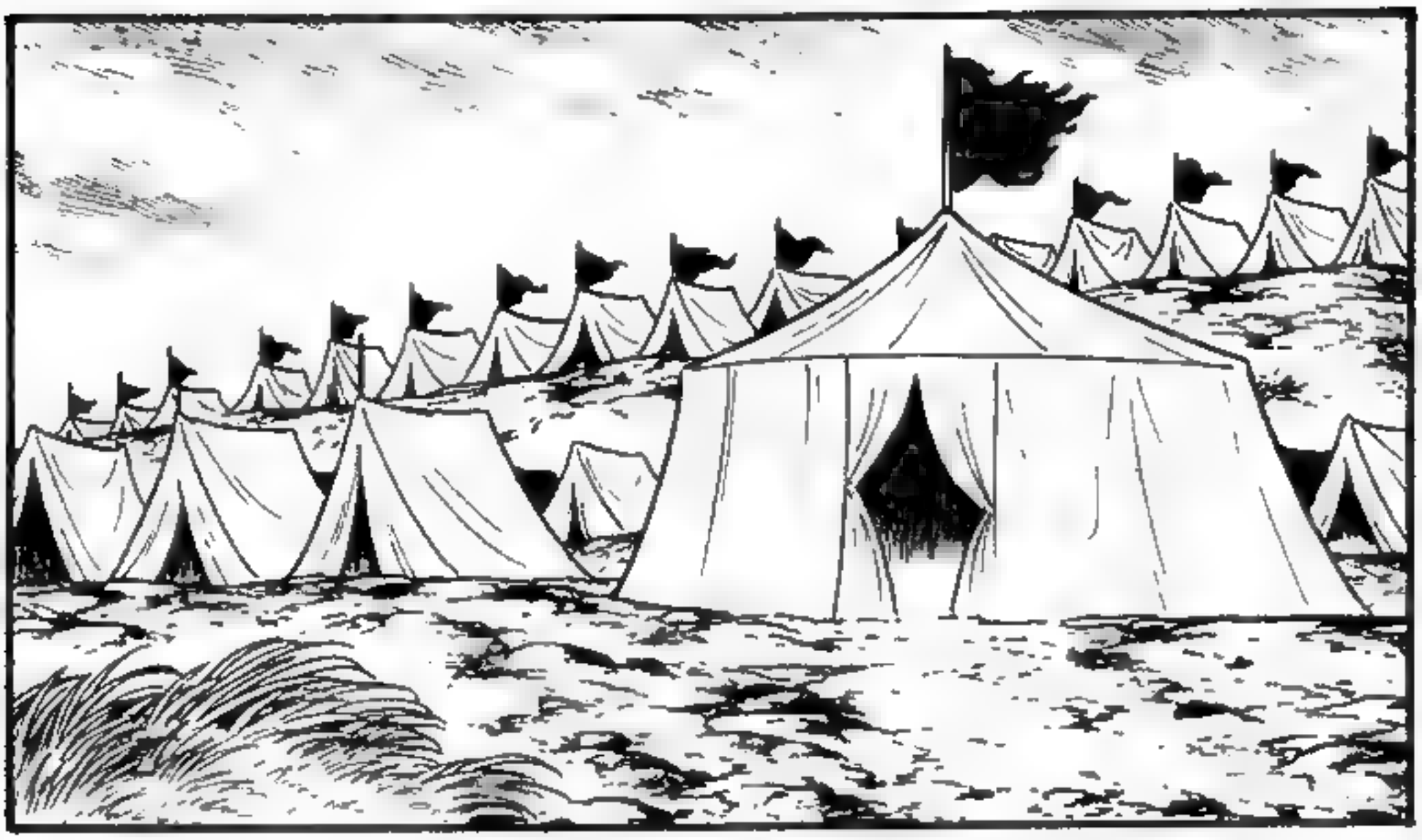
WE MUST USE BOTH JIANGXIA AND XIAKOU TO THREATEN THE ENEMY'S ADVANCE.

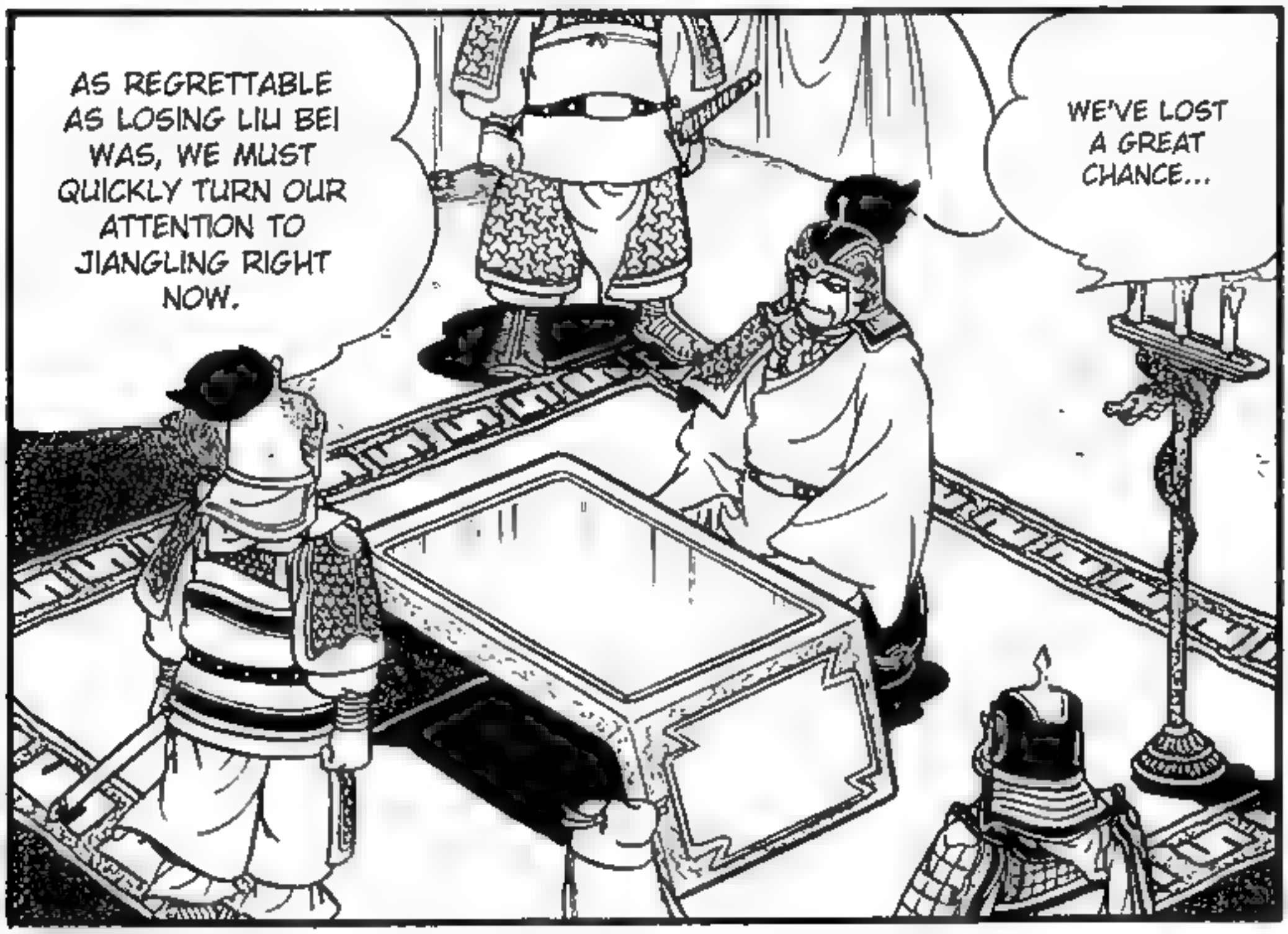
YES, MY LORD.

GUAN YU. I WANT YOU TO TAKE 5000 TROOPS AND DEFEND XIAKOU WHILE THE REST OF US HEAD TO JIANGXIA.


AND SO, GUAN YU HEADED FOR XIAKOU WHILE LIU BEI, LIU QI, AND ZHUGE LIANG LEFT FOR JIANGXIA.
劉琦
劉琦

MILLION-MAN ARMY

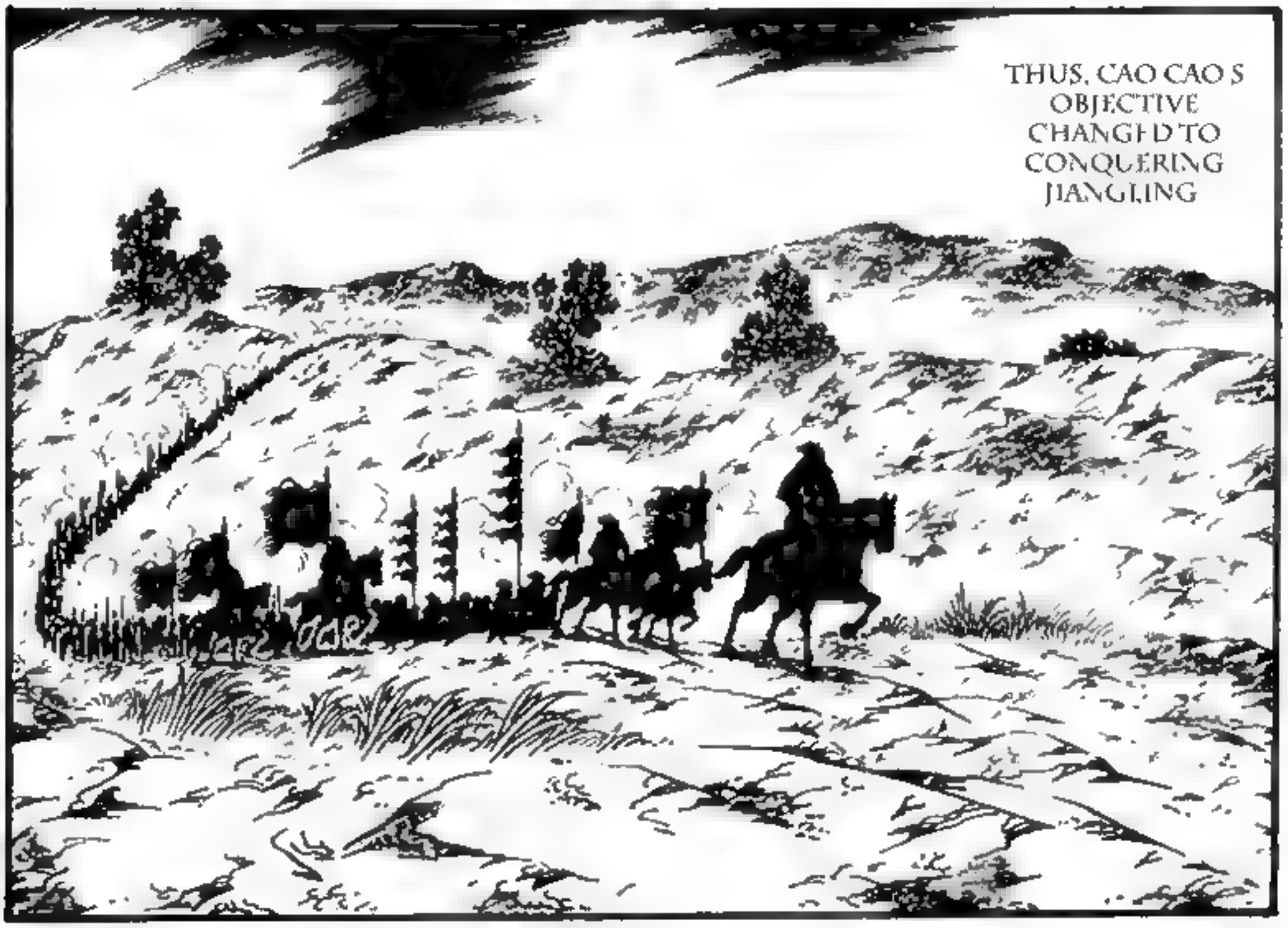




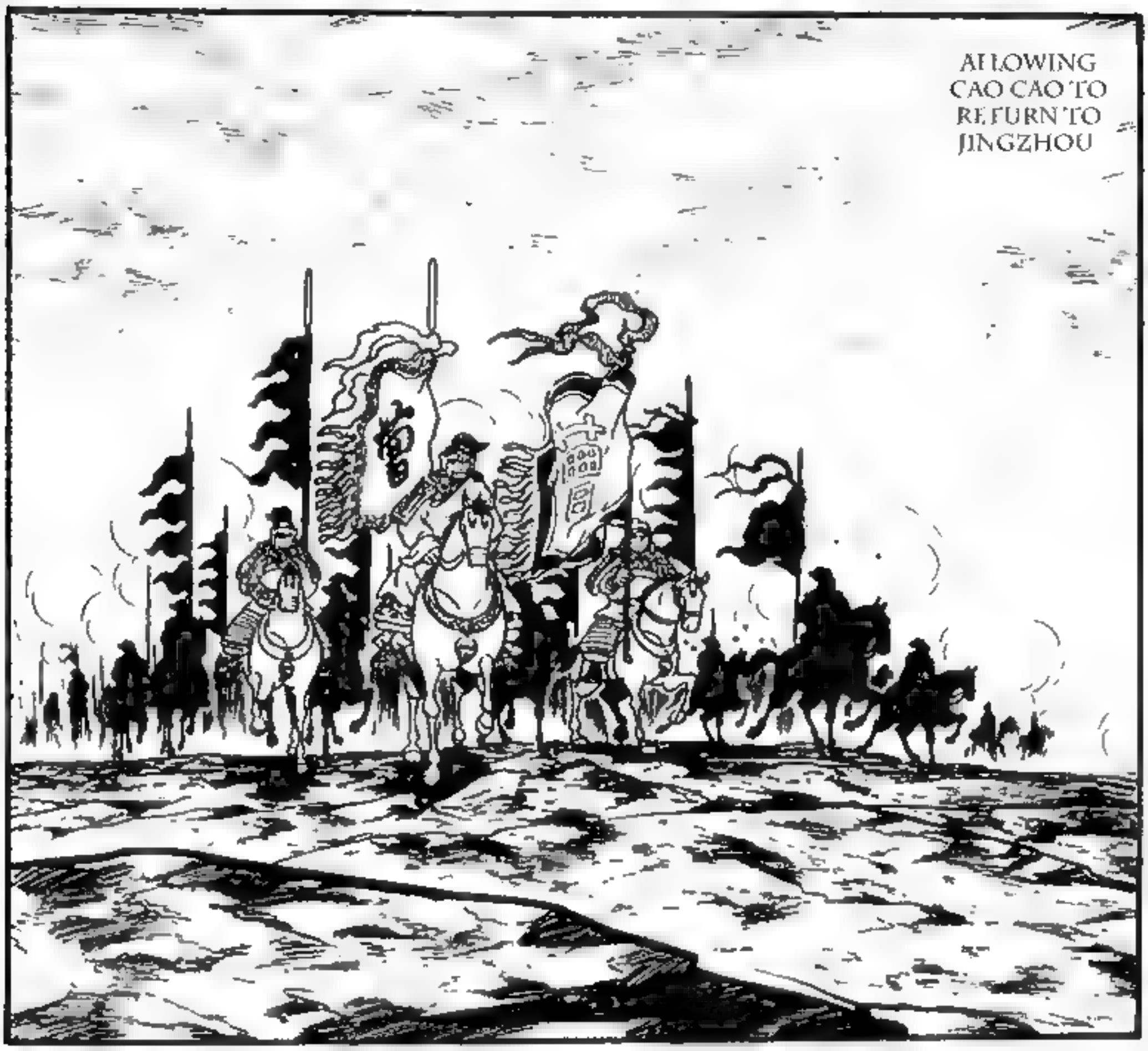
AS CAI MAO SAID BEFORE, JIANGLING IS A CRITICAL FORTRESS WITH AN AMPLE STOCK OF MONEY AND GRAINS. WE MUST NOT ALLOW LIU BEI TO GET A HOLD OF IT BEFORE US.

THEN LET US DEPART FOR JIANGLING!

YES, GOOD POINT.


THUS, CAO CAO'S OBJECTIVE CHANGED TO CONQUERING JIANGLING

JIANGLING PUT UP NO REAL RESIST-ANCE AND WAS SUBDUED INSTANTLY.


ALLOWING CAO CAO TO RETURN TO JINGZHOU

NOW THAT THE LATE LIU BIAO'S SUBJECTS HAVE ALL SWORN LOYALTY TO THE CHANCELLOR, THE LANDS OF JINGZHOU ARE AS GOOD AS PACIFIED.

WU IS THE ONLY STATE LEFT STANDING IN SIR'S WAY.

YES...

CONQUER WU AND THE EMPIRE SHALL BE UNIFIED ONCE MORE.

I SUGGEST WE FORCE A SURENDER BY A SHOW OF FORCE.

BUT THE QUESTION IS HOW...

THEN, WE WILL SEND A LETTER TO SUN QUAN.

WITH JINGZHOU'S FORCES NOW IN OUR CONTROL, OUR ARMY NUMBERS AT 850,000. WE SHOULD FIRST MOVE OUR ARMY UP TO WU'S BORDERS.

WRITTEN ON IT WILL BE AN OFFER TO ALLY AGAINST LIU BEI'S FORCES AT XIAKOU AND JIANGXIA.

BUT WHAT IF HE REJECTS ...?

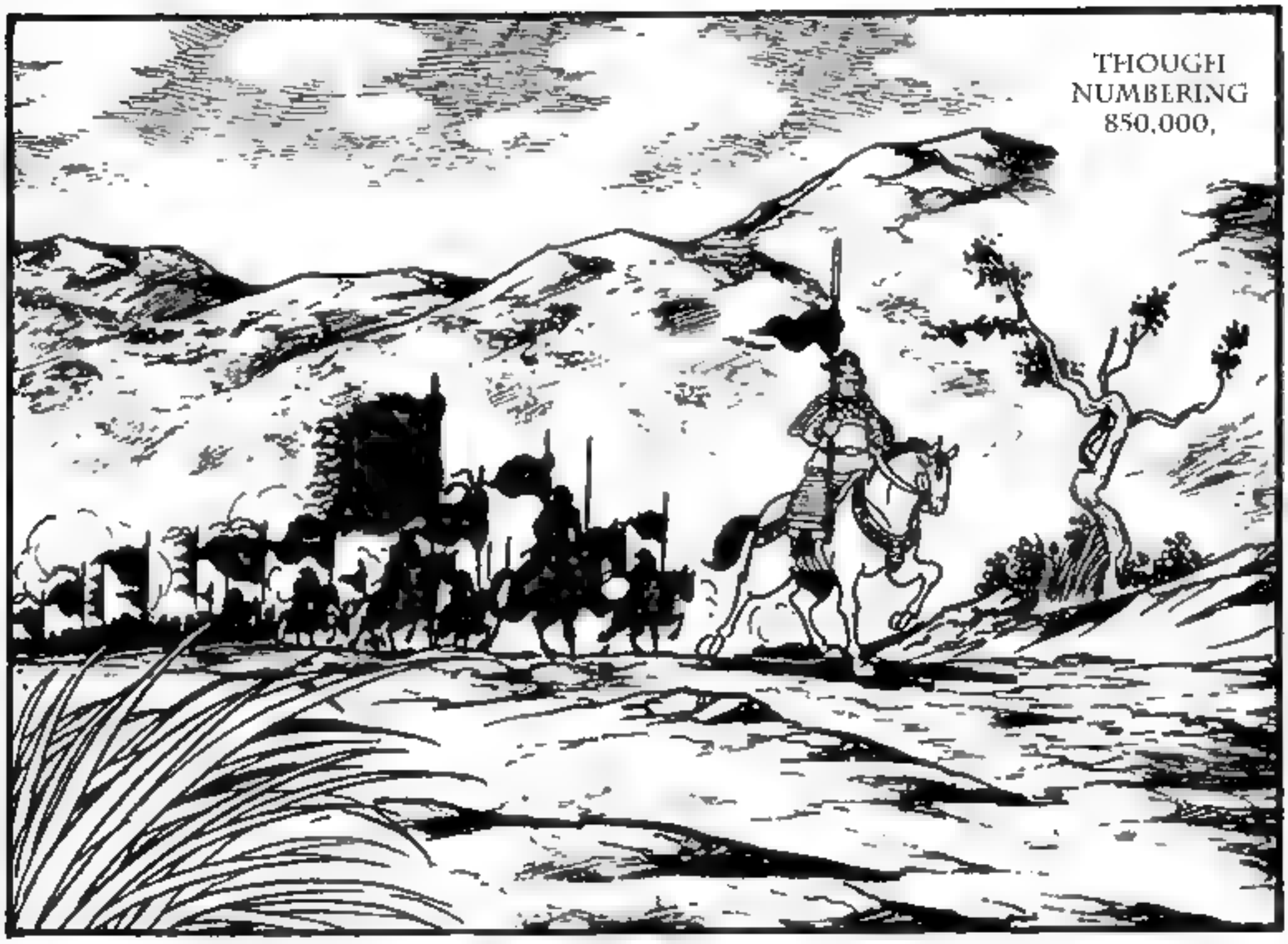
ACCEPTING THE OFFER WILL IMPLY SUN QUAN'S INTENTION TO SUBMIT TO YOU, CHANCELLOR.

I SEE.

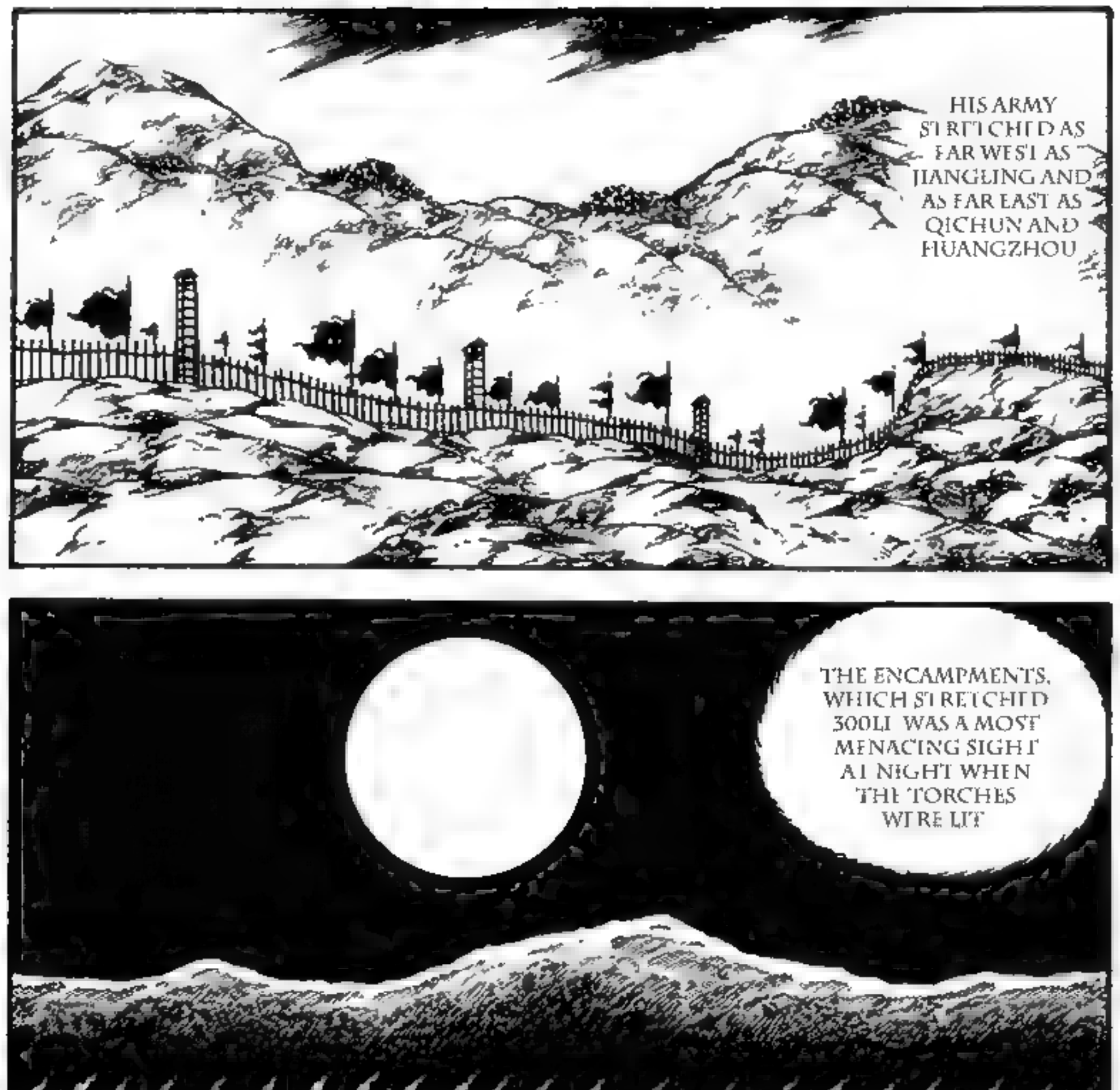
IF SO, SIR SHOULD TAKE WU BY FORCE, OF COURSE.

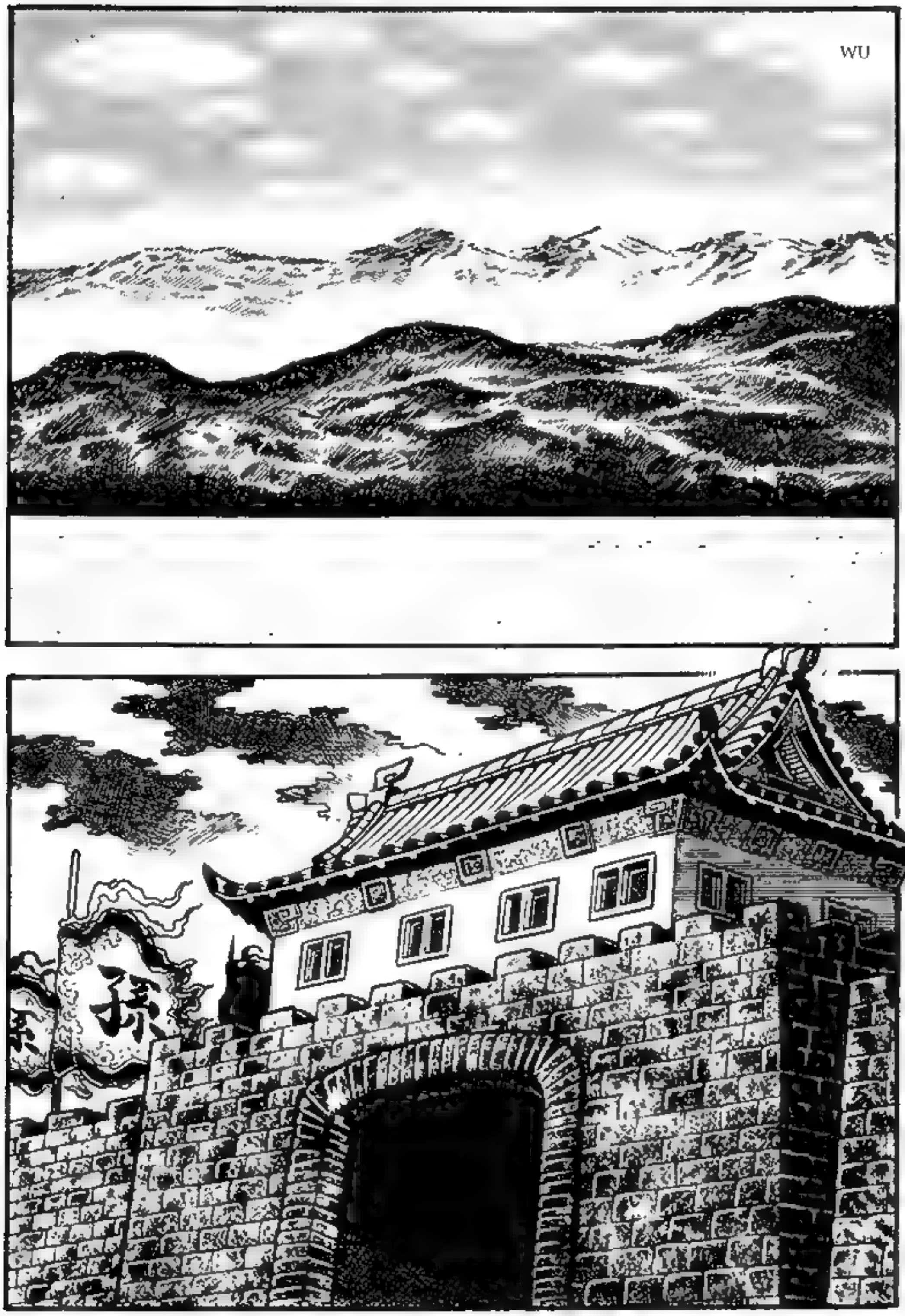
YES, SIR.

ALRIGHT THEN. MOBILIZE OUR ENTIRE FORCES ALONG WU'S BORDERS AND SEND A LETTER TO SUN QUAN.


THOUGH NUMBERING 850,000,

CAO CAO CLAIMED THAT HIS FORCES WERE A MILLION STRONG


HIS ARMY STRETCHED AS FAR WEST AS JIANGLING AND AS FAR EAST AS QICHUN AND HUANGZHOU
THE ENCAMPMENTS, WHICH STRETCHED 300LI WAS A MOST MENACING SIGHT AT NIGHT WHEN THE TORCHES WERE LIT


WU

LU SU. CAO CAO HAS RECENTLY MOBILIZED HIS FORCES ALONG OUR BORDER, AS IF THREATENING US TO SUBMIT.

I'D LIKE TO ASK FOR YOUR OPINION.

TO SUBMIT TO CAO CAO OR ALLY WITH LIU BEI AND FIGHT... THE VERY FATE OF WU HANGS ON THIS QUESTION.

AND?

ALLOW ME TO GO OVER TO JIANGXIA ON THE PRETENSE OF PAYING RESPECTS FOR LIU BIAO'S RECENT DEATH.

BUT IF THAT HAPPENS, CAO CAO WILL BE SURELY ENRAGED AND INVADE WU.

WHAT?

THERE, I SHALL DETERMINE HOW MUCH OF A THREAT CAO CAO REALLY IS AND IF POSSIBLE, CONVINCE LIU BEI TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE BY SAYING WU WILL BACK HIM UP.

NOT QUITE.

BUT IF CAO CAO REALIZES THAT LIU BEI HAS OUR SUPPORT, CAO CAO WILL TURN HIS ATTENTION TOWARDS LIU BEI AGAIN AND DELAY INVADING WU.

CAO CAO CAN AFFORD TO CONCENTRATE HIS ENTIRE FORCES ON WU BECAUSE LIU BEI'S BASE OF POWER HAS BEEN WEAKENED.

SO PLEASE DELAY YOUR DECISION UNTIL I GO AND ASCERTAIN THE STATUS OF LIU BEI AND CAO CAO'S FORCES.

I SEE.

ALRIGHT, THEN. PLEASE GO AT ONCE.

HMM...

YES, SIR.

MEAN-
WHILE IN
JIANGXIA,

AS I'VE SAID MANY TIMES BEFORE, THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION IS TO MAKE CAO CAO FIGHT AGAINST SUN QUAN.

THE MEN HAD BEEN BUSY DISCUSSING HOW BEST TO COUNTER CAO CAO.

BUT DO YOU THINK THINGS WILL REALLY GO AS YOU WANT THEM TO?

DOING SO WILL ALLOW MY LORD TO NOT ONLY RECOVER, BUT ALSO RE-ESTABLISH A BASE OF POWER BY EXPLOITING EITHER SIDE'S LOSSES.

AN OPPOR-TUNITY?

WORRY NOT, MY LORD. AN OPPORTUNITY SHALL SOON PRESNT ITSELF.

AS THE ART OF WAR DICTATES, WINNING WITHOUT FIGHTING IS THE BEST TYPE OF VICTORY.

I'M QUITE CERTAIN THAT A MESSENGER FROM WU WILL ARRIVE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. ONCE THAT HAPPENS, I SHALL PERSONALLY GO OVER TO WU AND ARRANGE IT SO THAT SUN QUAN DECLARES WAR ON CAO CAO.

ALTHOUGH I ACKNOWL-EDGE YOUR BRILLIANT FORESIGHT, I HAVE MY DOUBTS THAT SUN QUAN WOULD REALLY WANT TO FACE CAO CAO'S VAST ARMY...

SEEMS PRETTY DAMN UNLIKELY, IF YOU ASK ME,

A MESSENGER FROM WU BY THE NAME OF LU SU HAS ARRIVED JUST NOW. HE SAYS HE WISHES TO PAY RESPECT FOR LIU BIAO'S RECENT PASSING AWAY.

THAT WAS A LITTLE SOONER THAN I HAD EXPECTED.

TELL ME, KONGMING. HOW ON EARTH DID YOU KNOW THAT A MESSENGER FROM WU WOULD REALLY COME?

KEEPING THAT IN MIND, IT'S CLEAR THAT LU SU HAS COME NOT TO PAY RESPECT FOR LIU BIAO'S DEATH, BUT TO SCOUT OUT THE SITUATION AND PERSUADE MY LORD.

NO MATTER HOW STRONG WU MAY BE, IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT SUN QUAN WOULD BE AFRAID OF CAO CAO'S MILLION-MAN ARMY. NOT ONLY THAT, WU'S ARMY IS LACKING IN ACTUAL COMBAT EXPERIENCE COMPARED TO CAO CAO'S MEN. AS SUCH, IT WOULD BE IN THEIR BEST INTERESTS TO HAVE MY LORD ATTACK CAO CAO WHILE THEY LIE BACK AND OBSERVE THE SITUATION. ONLY AFTER THEN, WILL THEY DECIDE TO GO AGAINST CAO CAO OR NOT.

OF COURSE NOT. JINGZHOU AND WU ARE MUTUAL ENEMIES WITH A HISTORY OF BORDER CONFLICTS.

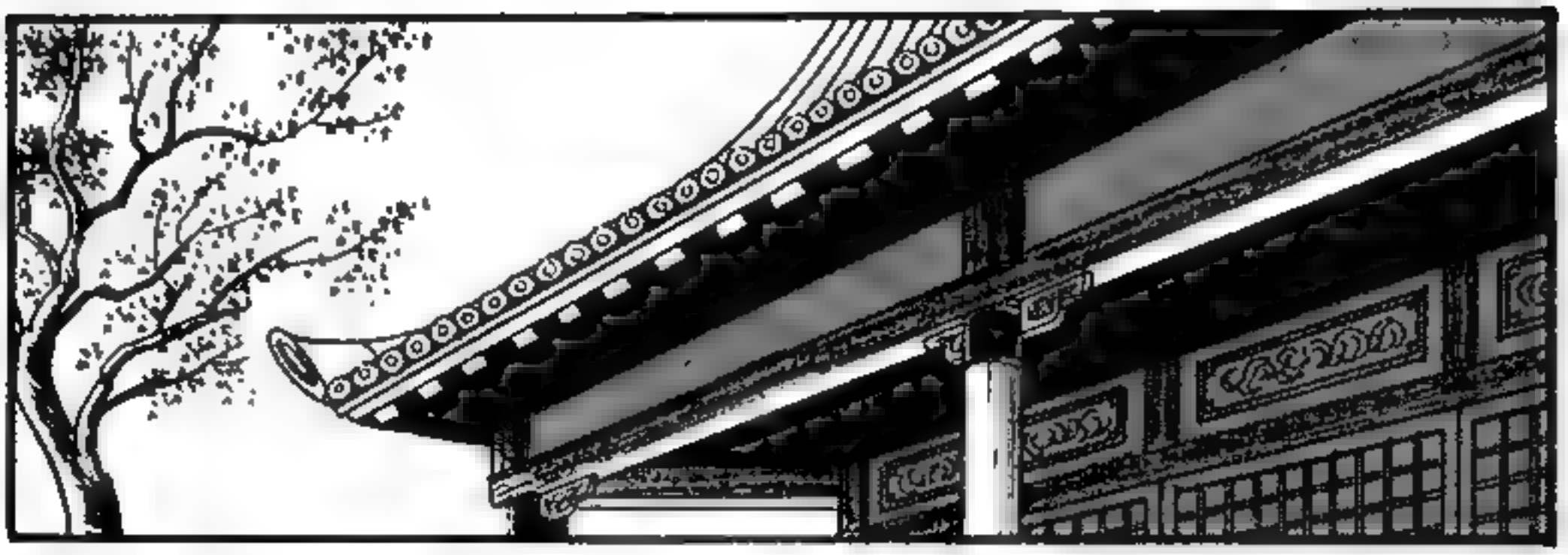
LET ME ASK YOU ONE THING, LIU QI. DID JINGZHOU EVER SEND A MESSENGER TO PAY RESPECTS WHEN SUN CE PASSED AWAY?

LET HIM IN AND BE SURE TO TREAT HIM COURTEOUSLY.

THERE YOU HAVE IT. WHY WOULD SUN QUAN SUDDENLY DECIDE TO PAY RESPECTS FOR LIU BIAO'S DEATH WHEN THE TWO HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN ENEMIES? THIS IS CLEAR PROOF THAT LU SU HAS COME FOR A FAR GREATER PURPOSE.

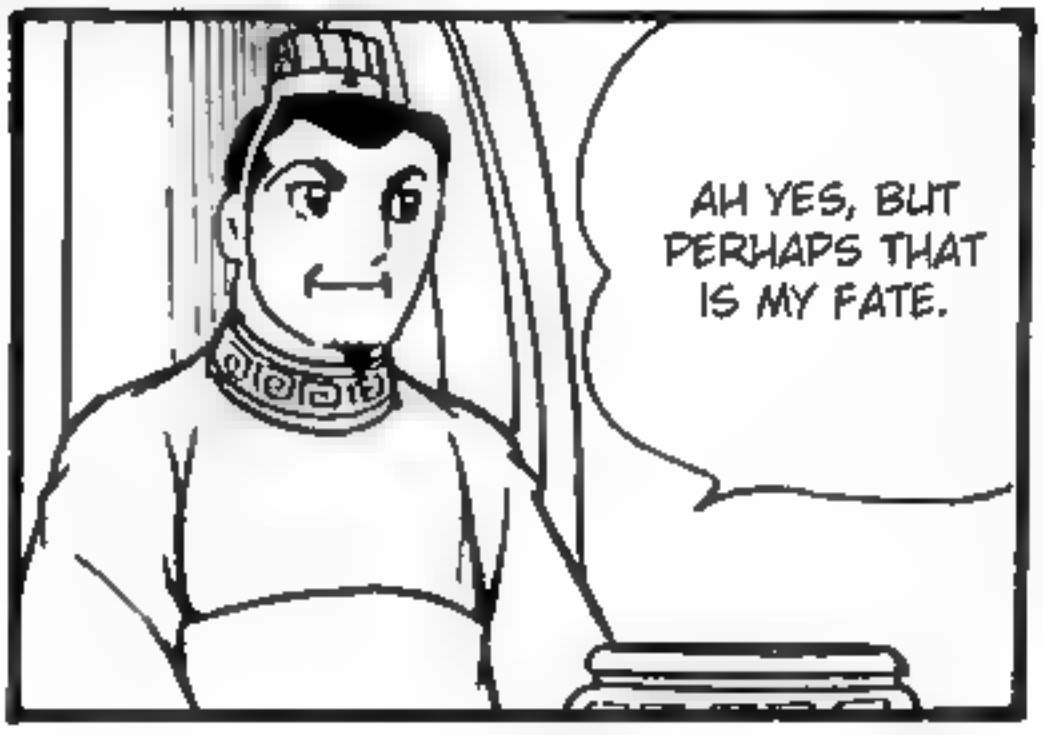
UNDER-STOOD.

PLEASE FEIGN IGNORANCE AND REFUSE TO ANSWER ANY OF THE MESSENGER'S QUESTIONS, MY LORD. AND WHEN HE INVITES ME TO WU, YOU MUST FAKE DISAPPROVAL.

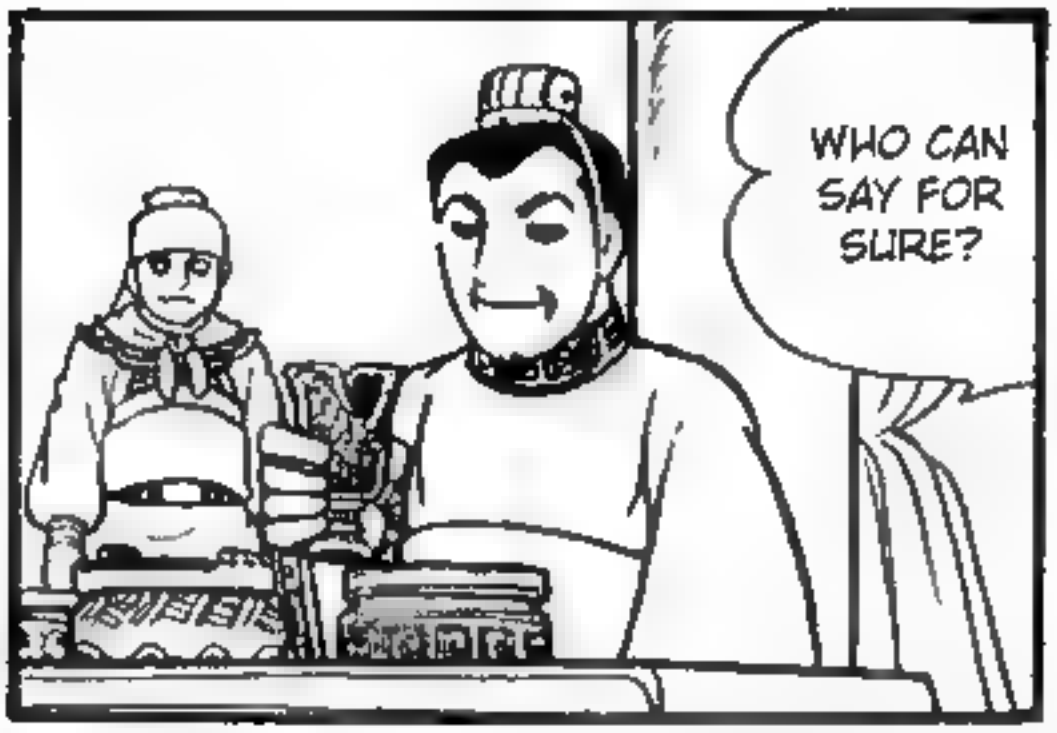


I THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS IN COMING HERE TO PAY RESPECTS.

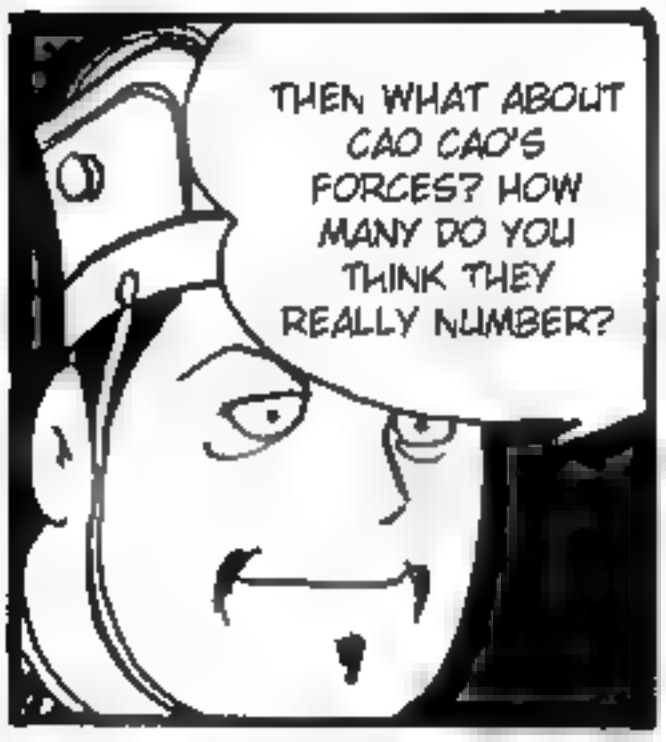
OH, IT'S ONLY OBVIOUS FOR WU TO DO SO.

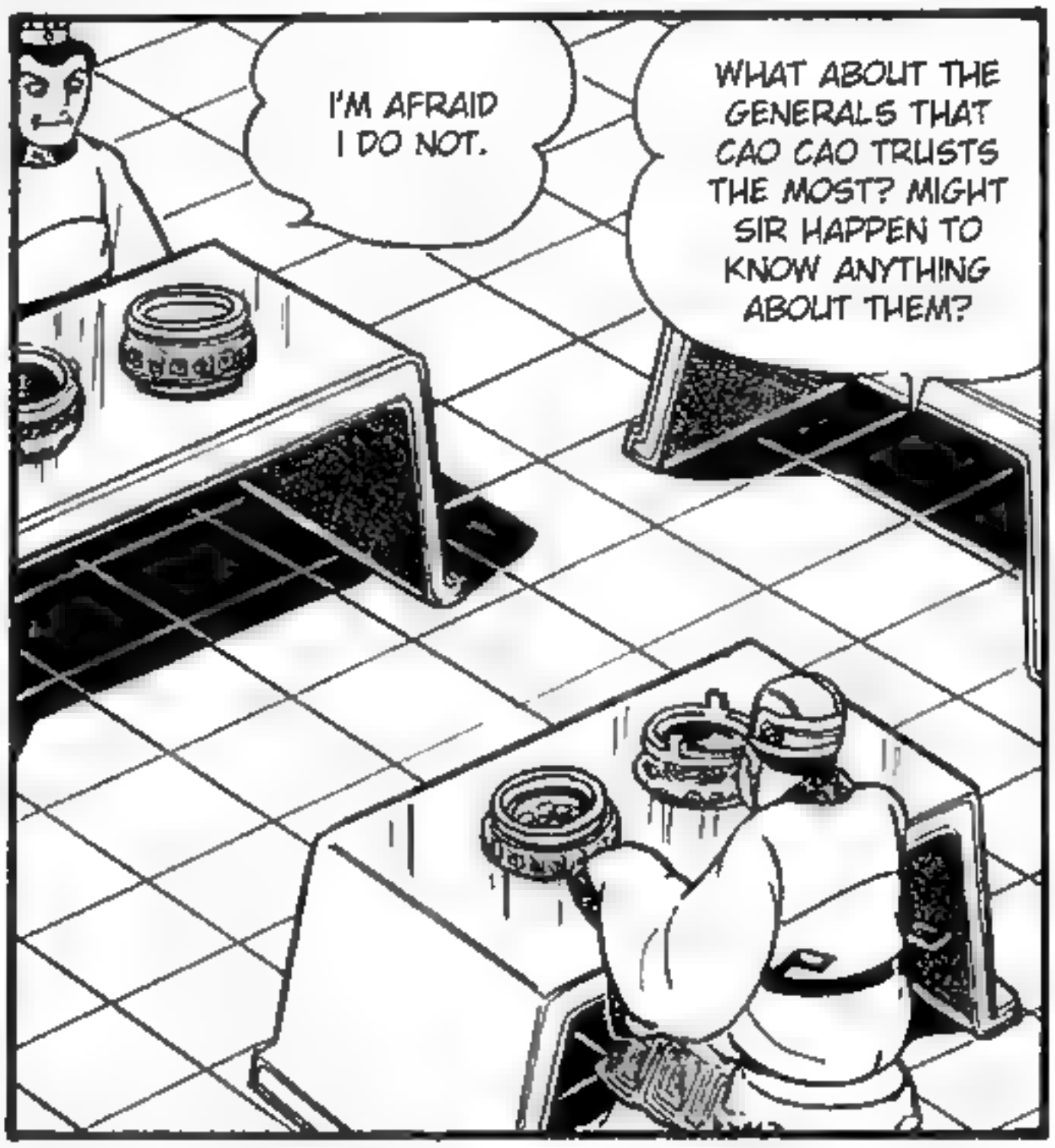

AH YES, BUT PERHAPS THAT IS MY FATE.

BY THE WAY, I'VE HEARD THAT YOU'RE UNDER QUITE A THREAT FROM CAO CAO THESE DAYS.


WHO CAN SAY FOR SURE?

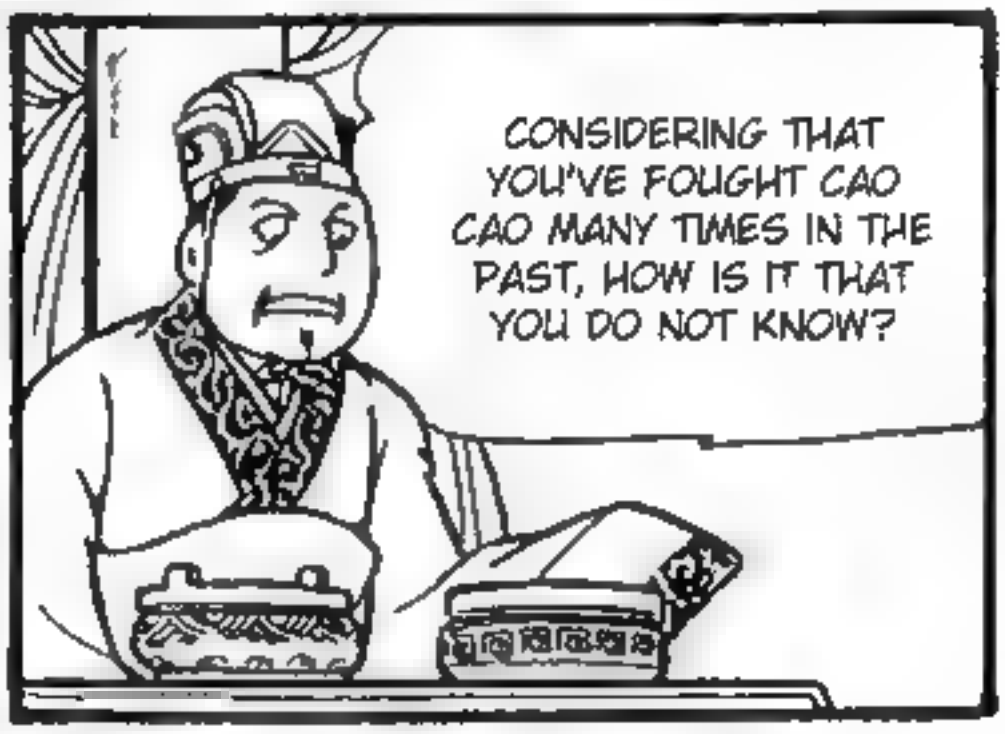
DO YOU THINK CAO CAO REALLY INTENDS TO CONQUER CHINA FOR THE RESTORATION OF HAN OR ONLY FOR HIS OWN GREEDY ASPIRATIONS?


THEN WHAT ABOUT CAO CAO'S FORCES? HOW MANY DO YOU THINK THEY REALLY NUMBER?


I'M AFRAID I DO NOT.
WHAT ABOUT THE GENERALS THAT CAO CAO TRUSTS THE MOST? MIGHT SIR HAPPEN TO KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THEM?

WHO KNOWS?

WELL, I WAS TOO BUSY FLEEING IN TERROR WHENEVER HIS FORCES CAME TO ATTACK, YOU SEE.


CONSIDERING THAT YOU'VE FOUGHT CAO CAO MANY TIMES IN THE PAST, HOW IS IT THAT YOU DO NOT KNOW?

ZHUGE LIANG!

BUT I'M SURE MY ADVISOR ZHUGE LIANG WOULD KNOW.

AH, SO YOU'RE THE FAMOUS ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING.

THIS HERE IS LU SU FROM WU.

OH, YOU KNOW MY BROTHER?

I HAPPEN TO BE A CLOSE FRIEND OF YOUR OLDER BROTHER, ZHUGE JIN.

REALLY?

THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR. YOU SEE, MY LORD HAS BEEN THINKING OF JOINING HANDS WITH SUN QUAN FOR SOME TIME.

DESTROY US BOTH?

AFTER ALL, IF WE DO NOT FORM AN ALLIANCE, CAO CAO SHALL DESTROY US BOTH.

THEN ARE YOU SAYING THAT I'M WRONG?

IT ALMOST SOUNDS AS IF I'M BEING THREATENED TO JOIN HANDS...

HA...

YES, OF COURSE. IF MY LORD WERE TO SURRENDER, CAO CAO'S FORCES WOULD EXERT AN EVEN GREATER PRESSURE ON WU. I DO NOT THINK WU COULD FEND OFF CAO CAO'S ENORMOUS ARMY ALONE. THE PROBLEM IS, I FEAR THAT WU WOULD BE UNWILLING TO FORM AN ALLIANCE WITH MY LORD.

I ALSO PERSONALLY BELIEVE IT WOULD BE BEST FOR YOUR LORD AND MINE TO JOIN HANDS.

NO, IT'S EXACTLY AS YOU SAY.

IN FACT, WHY DON'T YOU COME ALONG WITH ME TO WU TO FURTHER DISCUSS THIS MATTER?

YES, CERTAINLY. NOT ONLY IS YOUR BROTHER A TRUSTED ADVISOR OF WU, I WOULD BE HAPPY TO VOUCH FOR YOUR OPINION TO MY LORD.

AH, SO AN ALLIANCE IS POSSIBLE THEN?

AND SO, KONGMING SET SAIL FOR WU IN ORDER TO CONVINCE SUN QUAN TO FIGHT AGAINST CAO CAO.

PITTING THESE TWO MEN AGAINST EACH OTHER WAS THE ONLY OPTION LEFT FOR LIU BEI, WHOSE OWN FATE WAS NOW HANGING BY A THREAD.

TRANSLATED BY HOX

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三国志

23

横山 光輝

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Original 潮出版社 希望コミックス

Digital Distributor
eBOOK Initiative Japan Co.,Ltd.
〒101-0062　東京都千代田区神田駿河台 2-9-18
http://www.ebookjapan.jp